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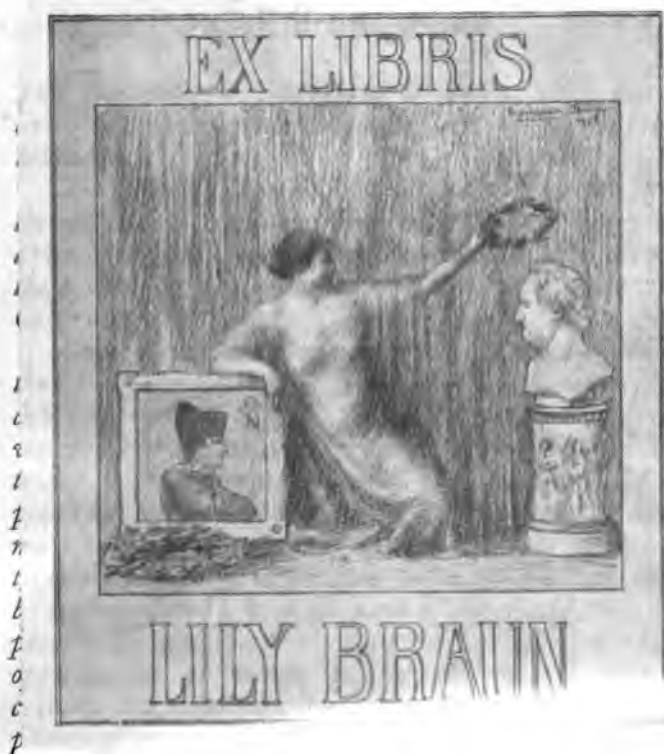
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us the trend and character of the movement, and the signs of its development in each individual country.

This collection of facts we now present to all interested in woman's mission and work in the world, in the hope that it may help to form right judgment and wise action.

The Editor must appeal for indulgence from both

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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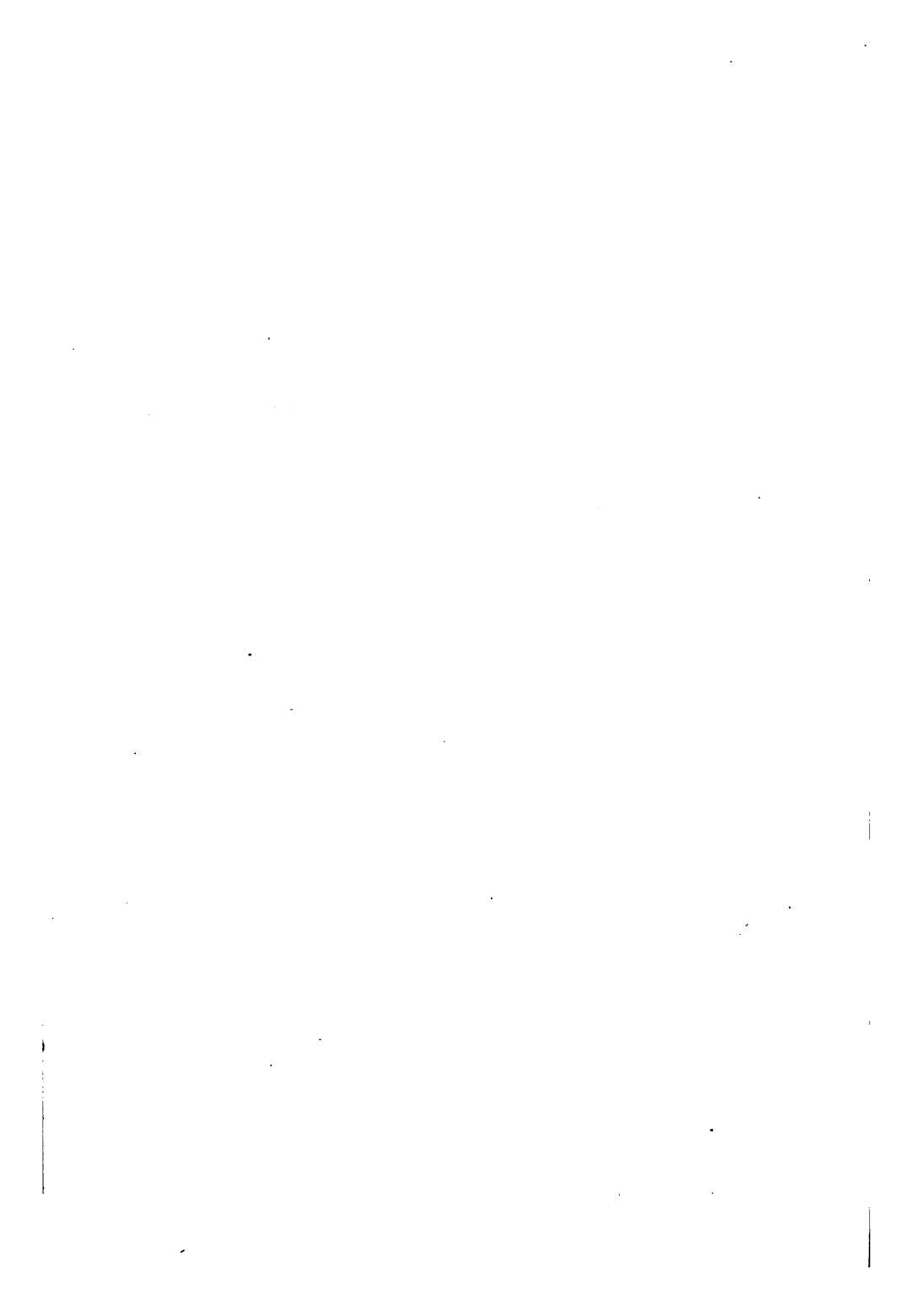
ISABEL ABERDEEN,  
Retiring President.

Haddo House, Aberdeen.  
December 1899.









WOMEN IN INDUSTRIAL LIFE

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS  
OF WOMEN OF 1899

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EDITED BY  
THE COUNTESS OF ABERDEEN  
*President*



# WOMEN IN INDUSTRIAL LIFE

THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
INDUSTRIAL AND LEGISLATIVE SECTION  
OF  
**The International Congress of Women**  
*LONDON, JULY 1899*



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY MRS J. R. MACDONALD  
*Convener of the Legislative and Industrial Sectional Committee*



LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN  
PATERNOSTER SQUARE. 1900

1877

Oct 6

INDUSTRIAL AND LEGISLATIVE SECTIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WOMEN.

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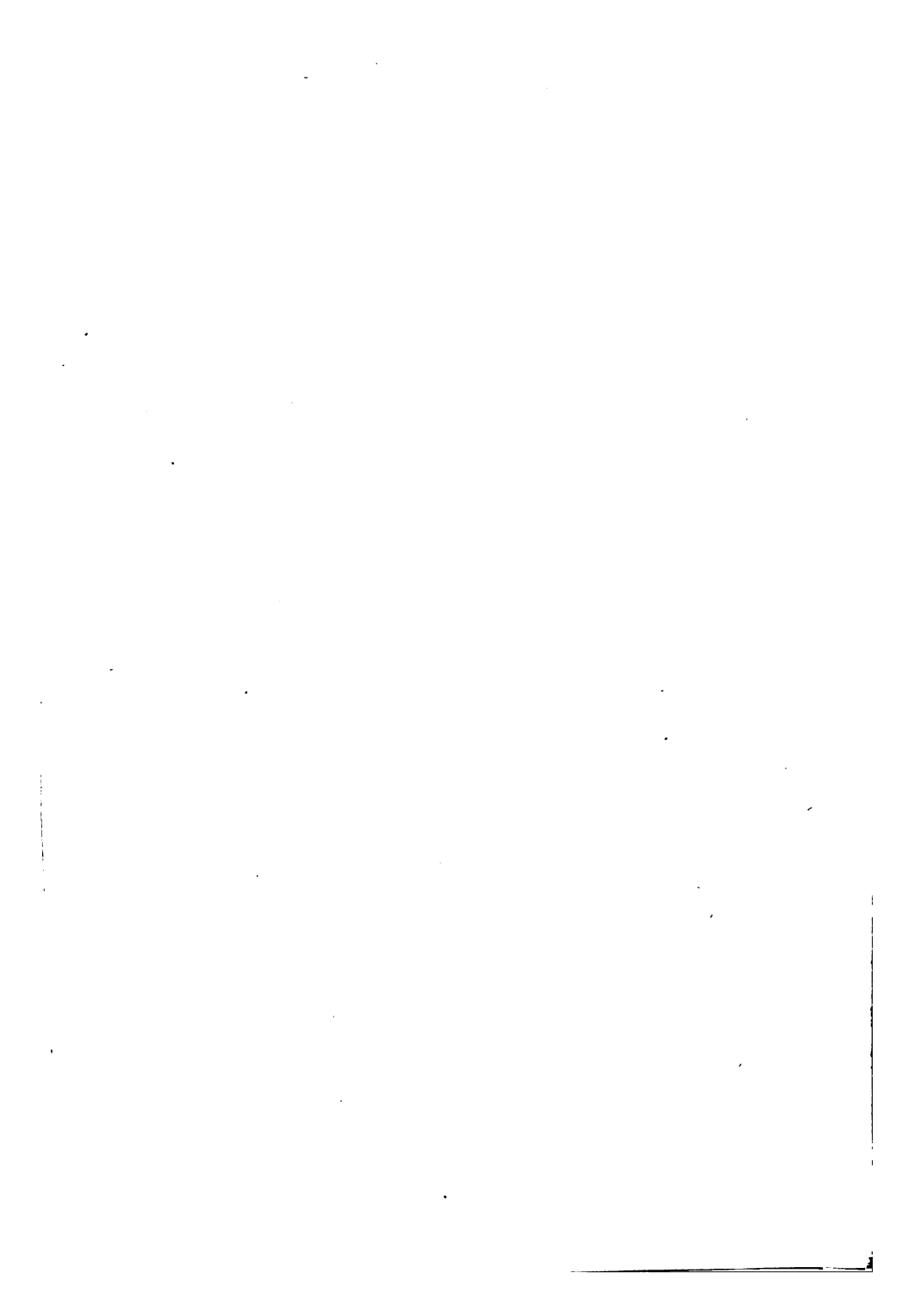
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# WOMEN IN INDUSTRIAL LIFE

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## INTRODUCTION.

It was specially appropriate that our Women's Congress should devote a large share of attention to the conditions under which industries are carried on by women. Not only is the great mass of paid work carried on by women done by those of the wage-earning classes, but since we all share in the results of their labour, we all share in the responsibility for it. Several speakers pointed out during the meetings that women have less to do in actual housework than formerly—clothing is woven and made up outside the home; the preparation of food is removed more and more from the fireside to the factory; washing is sent to laundries, and so on. But it is just these processes which used to be done by each housewife for her own household that now employ so many women in factories and workrooms and shops. The women in the textile trades, the girls in the jam factory or the clothing establishments, are not taking the places of men, but of other women. They are doing the work which, without the present organisation of industry, each of their sister women would have to do.

Unfortunately the benefit of this labour-saving organisation comes last to those who now as wage-earners make for others the necessities which each formerly made for her own family. From country after country, from industry after industry, come the sad tales of long hours, insanitary conditions, wretched pay, poor food and dwellings, and the want of all the outward circumstances which are necessary for a free and a full life. With working women these conditions are even worse than with working men, and the problem of how to remedy them is even more

complicated. For, with the average woman, outside employment is not her chief life-work as it is with the man. Her marriage must always interfere with it, more or less. As a girl she regards her trade as a passing circumstance, and looks forward to the time when she will have a husband to do the wage-earning, and leave her free for other cares. Even if she never marries, she will probably have house-keeping duties at some time in her life. The married woman who goes out to work has to give a large share of her attention to the wants of her husband and children, and the widow is so overburdened with the maintenance of her household that she has no power nor energy to bargain with her employer for good conditions. Then, too, a woman is often not altogether dependent on her own exertions for a living, and is tempted to accept a pocket-money wage, and so beat down the living wage of others. Thus it too frequently happens that those members of our army of industry who ought to have the shortest hours and the best return for their work in order to give them time and strength for the additional unpaid work of the home, are ground down to accept the hardest conditions and the least pay of all.

The community is waking up to see that this state of things must not continue. For the sake of justice to the individual, these women must not be allowed to spend lives of drudgery in the service of the public without recognition or reward. For the sake of social well-being it is not right that the mothers of the rising generation should be overdriven and underfed. The Congress showed that there are many earnestly striving to remedy this injustice and shortsightedness. More and more the educated and well-to-do are seeing that, in order to really help their poorer sisters, they must take into account the conditions under which they earn their daily bread, and that the best way to raise their moral and spiritual level is to see first that they are not cheated of their material necessities. Before good work in reform can be done it is necessary to have accurate knowledge of the state of things to be reformed. The need for careful preliminary investigation was urged by speaker after speaker, and it is probable that one of the useful results of the Congress will be the more frequent and systematic interchange of experience between those working at these subjects in different countries. Different parts of the globe were well represented in this section. There were speakers from France, Germany, Austria and Hungary, Russia and Finland, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Sweden and Norway, Denmark, the United States,

Canada, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and the British Isles. Unfortunately few of the working women themselves were able to take part. It was pointed out that even where, in some cases, offers had been made to pay their expenses, they could not get away from their work to attend.

In dealing with such complex and deep-seated evils as those involved in the economic position of women, the subject has to be approached from many sides; and in arranging the subjects for discussion we tried to include the most important lines of attack. Broadly speaking, there are two methods of reform—that undertaken by the individual and that undertaken by the State, and both of these were treated from many different points of view.

Several meetings were devoted to the consideration of the various ways in which the workers can combine in their own interests. Trade Unionism, Co-operation, Profit-sharing in so far as it is based on the principle of co-operative production, and Friendly Societies<sup>1</sup> were described as they exist in different countries, and many suggestive hints gathered from experience were thrown out. But the special difficulties which make women give way more easily than men to evil conditions of work render it harder for them to combine to uphold their rights. Excellent results are sometimes attained, but nowhere are more than a small proportion of the women workers banded together, and it is just those who are worst paid and most in need of the benefits of combination who are least able to unite.

Employers can do much for the welfare of their employees, though it is hard to fight against custom and competition. The average employer is apt to look upon his workers as "hands," not as human beings; whilst we sometimes find a man who treats them as machines, driving them to the uttermost for his own profit, and flinging them aside for new ones which he can get for the asking. The consumer has responsibilities too, and it was pointed out that the woman who buys goods at a price which obviously cannot afford a decent return to the worker, or who shops at an establishment where she can see that the assistants have long hours and bad accommodation, is as much to blame for her greed and her thoughtlessness as the greediest and most careless of employers.

In our present industrial system, reforms cannot be left solely to individual effort, whether of employee, employer, or consumer.

<sup>1</sup> For report on these see Social Section Report Meeting, on "Provident Schemes" (held in conjunction with the Industrial Section), page 184, Vol. vii.

The organisation is too wide-spreading, the interdependence of one upon another too complex for this. All the interacting factors in the great hive of industry are but parts of a community, and the community as a whole is finally responsible for the welfare of each of its members.

There are three different methods by which the State may recognise its responsibilities to its workers; first, by education; secondly, by regulation of the conditions of work; and finally, by setting a high standard where it is itself the employer. A joint meeting on the Industrial Training of Girls and Women which was held by the Industrial and Educational Sections is given in the report of the latter. This meeting dealt both with the general training of hand and eye, and the more specific training for special trades, both of which are necessary for work of any value. With more systematic industrial training we should not have women crowding into unskilled trades, and clamouring for work which could be done equally well by machinery, and for which therefore they are forced to accept a starvation wage. They would instead be able to offer work which is worth doing, and society and themselves would be the richer.

State regulation of the conditions under which work is performed will be found discussed at some length in this volume, including the limitation of hours, the setting up of standards of sanitation, protection against accidents and poisonous processes, and the legal fixing of a minimum wage. At the meeting where the theory of such legislation was discussed there was considerable division of opinion—some being disinclined to legislative interference of any kind, and others opposed to any which affects women and not men. When, however, specific evils were under discussion, the general tendency seemed to be to call in the aid of the law, and very few objections were raised to the demands that the public conscience should speak through its Statute Books, and forbid the evils which were being reported from all quarters of the globe. The need for efficient administration of the laws was also constantly emphasised.

As an instance of the State as a model employer setting a good example where it is directly responsible for its employees, it was reported that the postal authorities of Switzerland have recognised the principle of equal pay for equal work, and pay their women as highly as their men.

In the special meeting on the Home as Workshop, the distinction between individual and State responsibility was markedly



brought out. In some home industries the best conditions prevail, because they are controlled by the workers themselves, or in some instances by societies formed for their encouragement. On the other hand, it was shown that the worst evils of the factory system have pushed themselves into the home and there become intensified, and it was claimed by speaker after speaker that the State must follow them there with its regulations.

Only one occupation had a special meeting to itself, but this was the time-honoured calling of Domestic Service, which employs more wage-earning women than any other. Here modern conditions have brought their own difficulties, and for their solution many proposals were made, from an extra night out for the housemaid to the establishment of co-operative homes, all however hinging on the raising of the level of the work and the dignity of the worker.

Another meeting was given to the consideration of Child Labour, in which women are particularly interested, both as the special guardians of childhood, and also because it is in their trades that children take most part, either as assistants or competitors. Appalling disclosures were made of the way in which a sham prosperity is being built up on the sacrifice of the health and enjoyment of these helpless little ones, and at the same time valuable suggestions were given as to methods of preventing such abuses.

In addition to the discussion of these various divisions of the industrial problem, a crowded public meeting was held on the Ethics of Wage-Earning, at which papers were read on some of the principles of economic justice and truth which are essential to a right appreciation of these problems, and which as applied to special instances had been referred to constantly during the week.

The Legislative and Industrial Section included one meeting on a subject which is legislative only and not industrial, and which is so wide in its importance that it affects equally women of all classes. This was the discussion on the laws affecting married women in relation to marriage, divorce, custody and guardianship of children and property. The session was held under the title "Civil Disabilities of Women," but it was refreshing to find that some of those who spoke disclaimed the title, and boasted that in their countries women laboured under no special disabilities, but were equal with men in all such matters. Others, however, gave accounts of the most humiliating disabilities imposed upon women, who are not allowed control over their own children or

property, and are forced to submit without redress to the most degrading and cruel conduct on the part of their husbands. No laws can interfere with the sanctity of the highest marriages, but unjust laws influence the general tone of society and lower the attitude of the average man towards women, besides leading to the most terrible consequences in the case of unhappy marriages; and those who are trying to remove such injustice are really fighting for the purification of society.

Looking back upon the meetings of this section, we see underlying them the same principles which underlie the whole work of the International Council and Congress. What all had before them as their ideal was the elevation of woman, not by means of sex warfare or class warfare, never at the expense of others, but by the full development of her own individuality. To attain this, each woman must recognise that she has certain duties and responsibilities towards others, and must put forth her best powers to fulfil these, whilst those around her must give her every advantage and freedom which will help her to develop her talents, and must secure to her an ample return for the services she renders.

M. E. MACDONALD,

*Convener of Industrial and Legislative Sectional Committee.*

# SPECIAL LABOUR LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN.

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## (A) THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS

SMALL HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

*TUESDAY, JUNE 27, MORNING.*

---

MRS SHELDON AMOS in the Chair.

AFTER laying down some rules for the debate, Mrs Sheldon Amos said that many friends present knew her views on the subject before them for discussion, but that she was not there on this occasion for the purpose of giving expression to these views. The question was how to work for the cure of the evils with which they had to deal,—how to change the particular conditions which were filling their hearts with pity, or their minds with indignation. In seeking for the remedies much care and wisdom are needed to avoid producing fresh, and even possibly worse, evils. Some think special legislation to restrict the free choice of work by women would be good. Some think the same restraints ought to be put on women and men. Others were of opinion that they should proceed along the same line of public policy as that laid down in the legislation which requires that ships should be constructed to float, and that the conditions of life on board should not be detrimental to health.

## Legislation Concerning Child-Bearing Women.

Mrs Amie Hicks (Great Britain).

IN dealing with this question, it ought not to be looked at from an individualist point of view ; it is much wider and larger than the individual can cover. At an International Conference it must be approached in the broadest and most comprehensive manner.

The child-bearing working woman is one of the most important personages in the nation. Not only does she maintain herself by her own industry. By her labour she helps to build up the wealth of the nation. She also gives to the nation its future toilers, and without these toilers the nation would soon sink into decay. It is therefore a matter of the highest national importance that her life should be protected and safeguarded in the best possible manner. This has been recognised by most civilised countries. Thus Austria legally prohibits women from working in *factories* for 4 weeks after child-birth, and, unless certified able for work, the prohibition extends to 6 weeks. In Belgium the prohibition lasts 4 weeks after child-birth, in Holland it is 4 weeks, Hungary 4 weeks, Germany 4 weeks to 6 weeks, Norway 4 weeks to 6 weeks, Portugal 4 weeks, and every establishment where 50 women are employed must have a *crèche*, and the women allowed to visit their infants in the *crèche*. In Switzerland the prohibition lasts 4 weeks, and child-bearing women may be forbidden to work in dangerous industries. In Great Britain and Ireland the prohibition lasts 4 weeks.

Thus it is evidently recognised by these various countries that the life and well-being of the working mother and child is a matter of *State interest* ; and that being so, the State ought to carry out its duty to the full, and give to the mother, whom it prohibits from working for her own maintenance, a maternity maintenance (and this without degradation) till the law says she may again resume her work. This will give time and opportunity for the holy and purifying influence of mother love to take root in the woman's heart—an influence that purifies and uplifts the character, and will bind closer the tie between the two lives that must be for the benefit of both. These prohibitive laws are,

in cases, evaded, the same as all other laws, but most times to the detriment of mother and child.

If children are to be brought into the world as toilers, it is a solemn duty laid on all concerned that these children shall enter life under the most favourable circumstances—that their lives shall be healthy and strong, their intellects keen and cultivated, that is the least they have a right to expect before entering on the tragedy of a toiler's life—and how grim a tragedy it is only those who have passed through can tell.

From a working woman's point of view, it is of the greatest importance that her working power should be preserved as long as possible, yet hospital and workhouse alike could tell piteous tales of the stricken women workers who have lost their all (that is their power to labour) through resuming their daily labour before Nature's laws had been properly obeyed. It is not only after child-birth that a woman's life needs protecting; those who know anything of practical midwifery can tell of the suffering and loss of life brought about by child-bearing women having to sit long hours in cramped positions during pregnancy, by long standing, lifting heavy weights, and long hours of labour.

Then the dangerous trades with their disastrous effects have to be faced. We women are very brave in denouncing the legalised moral sacrifice of our fellow-women, but we ought to be equally brave in denouncing the physical and mental sacrifice that goes on when women have to win their daily bread at the sacrifice of their lives and the lives of the children they bear, as is the case with those who work with lead. Surely the natural love of a mother must be bitterly torn when she has to see child after child either born dead or die soon after birth, because she has had to earn her living at an industry that scarcely permits her to have a living child.

From a national point of view it is equally disastrous for the worker to become a physical wreck, and the sanctity of life in the nation is the nation's great trust.

And shall not we women, gathered from all nations in conference, say that the women toilers shall be cared for in the time when they are giving to the world those who in times to come shall carry the world's burden, that no longer shall the nations reap the benefit of the labour and suffering of their women toilers and still leave them unguarded and uncared for while they are bearing the embryo men and women of the future, on whom the prosperity of the nations will depend.

## Report on the Laws for the Protection of Working Women in Austria.

**Frau Schlesinger (Austria). Read by Fräulein Levetus.**

In Austria legislation for the working class began in 1786 with the attempt to protect children employed in factories from the worst evils facing them.

The law of March 5, 1885, was the first Act which contained clauses for the protection of female factory hands.

Women in child-bed are not to be employed in factories for 4 weeks after their confinement, and in heavy work, such as at the pit's mouth, not till 6 weeks after, and then only during the daytime. But in special cases, if the doctor gives a certificate to the effect that they are strong enough, they may work 4 weeks after their confinement.

Youths and women may not be employed in dangerous trades, or such as are injurious to their health, but such trades have not been fixed by law, that being left for the Minister of Commerce to define, a right which till now has scarcely ever been exercised.

It is also forbidden for youths and females to do night work, but in the last Report of the Factory Inspectors the doctor states numerous violations of this law, and, besides, this law does not protect youths and females employed in workshops from night work.

By a law, December 28, 1887, the proprietors of factories, foundries, mines, dockyards, quarries, mills, and those engaged in building or agricultural pursuits which are driven by machinery, must insure their employees against accidents in the State Accident Insurance Office. Unfortunately this is not the case with regard to the smaller industries, in the pursuit of which accidents frequently happen.

A law, May 30, 1888, obliges both males and females employed in industrial occupations to belong to a sick fund, either of a trades society, a trades union, or a district sick society. Both male and female employees pay 2 per cent. of their earnings to the sick fund, and the master a sum amounting to 1 per cent. of all the wages paid. In case of illness both males and females receive 60 per cent. of their wages during 20

weeks, in addition to medical help, medicine or therapeutics, or, if sent to an hospital, one-half of this 60 per cent. is paid to those dependent on the patient and the other half to the hospital. If the patient is forced to stay longer than 10 weeks in the hospital, the whole 60 per cent. goes to the patient's family, while the hospital dues must be paid by his parish, town or village.

Women in child-bed receive the same proportion from the sick fund as do other patients, and in addition a small sum (4fl. or 5fl.—6s. 8d. to 8s. 6d.).

The official statistics for 1896 show 490,362 female members of the Workpeople's Sick Fund. Of these 164,978 received help during illness. The number of cases was 198,807, showing a total of 3,788,079 sick days. To these must be added 45,558 confinements, showing 1,234,465 sick days. The number of deaths among the members was 4,389 (22·07 per cent. of sick cases).

Although this number is terribly high, it gives no complete picture of the mortality among Austrian women, as, unfortunately, the duty of the sick fund does not touch home workers, and even in smaller factories and workshops it is often avoided.

The Industrial Inspection Institute was called into existence by a law of January 17, 1883. Although since then it has proved its worth, it cannot nearly satisfy the demands which must be made upon it in the interest of modern social politics. In every yearly report of the inspectors of factories we find the complaint that the inspectors are too much overburdened, and that their number is too small to enable them to fulfil their task properly. Further evils are that (1) home work is not under the supervision of an inspector; (2) that the inspectors have no power over the proprietor with respect to sanitary regulations and for the safety of the employees; (3) that they have no executive power over manufacturers who do not carry out the regulations made by law regarding the sanitary arrangements and security of employees; and (4) that the power of the inspectors is not increased by employment of assistants chosen from the working classes, and such as would best know their position and requirements; and finally, that there are no women inspectors, who would be more successful in gaining the confidence of the female hands, and so best represent their just and lawful interests.

The Industrial Regulations Act enacts that in factories the working day is to consist of not more than 11 hours, and that

the pauses amount to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours daily, irrespective of the 11 working hours. The Minister of Commerce can, with the agreement of the Chambers of Commerce and Industries, designate, order and choose the category of industries to which an increase of 1 hour per day in the number of working hours may be granted, naturally taking into account the special requirements of each case. Every manufacturer has also the right to order overtime in his factory three times a month by simply giving notice of his intention to the Commission of Industries—a right of which very frequent use is made, although overtime is, as a rule, paid at a higher rate than the normal wages.

On the other hand, it may be remarked that in many factories the number of working hours is fewer than the normal working day of 11 hours. The Report of the Inspectors of Factories, 1897, states that in more than 42 per cent. of the factories visited the number of working hours was less than 11.

In workshops the number of working hours is far more than 11, especially in those where principally women are employed. These can offer no resistance to the excessive abuse of their strength.

The last Report of the Inspectors of Factories also mentions several cases where the working hours were 17, or still longer.

In metal and machine industries, in which comparatively few women are employed, 10 hours is the general practice, while in the manufacture of ready-made and textile goods, where women are mostly employed, the working hours are almost always much longer.

As a rule Sunday work is not allowed in factories or on holidays. The workpeople must have sufficient time given to them to practise their religion according to their own faith.

The prohibition of Sunday work is especially disregarded in workshops where chiefly women are employed. On the other hand the holidays are kept much more strictly than the law demands.

According to the result of the inquiry into the conditions of working women in Vienna, held two years ago, the wages of working women can be divided into three classes:—

1. Unskilled labourers—those who have learnt but little, and are unskilled in the practice of their trades, earn from 4fl. to 5fl.—that is, 6s. 8d. to 8s. 4d. per week.
2. Skilled labourers, weekly wages, from 8s. 4d. to 12s. 8d.
3. Those who earn from 13s. 4d. to 16s. 8d., but such cases are rare, and such high wages can only be gained by



working far into the night, and at trades for which the season is a short one.

This "season" work at which the women work till they are quite exhausted is followed by a dead season, during which time they suffer from dire distress from want of work, and which is one of the great evils of female labour.

Another evil which prevents the working women from co-operation is want of means, and the arbitrary and unlawful fines which are exacted on every possible occasion. For example, an inspector reports on a fez manufactory, in which the female overseer was not paid by the manufacturer but from the fines extorted from the employees.

A terrible picture of how these poor women live was shown at the Frauen-Enquête, 1896. They suffer from want of proper food, proper dwellings, in fact, misery of all kinds, and the position of those living in the country is still worse than of those living in large towns. Unfortunately a large majority of working women in Austria keep all organisations at a wide distance. This can be explained by the agricultural depression, the over-long working day, and the general low standard of intelligence and want of education.

According to the minutes of the last Industrial Congress, 1896, the number of Social Democratic organised working women in Austria (there are no other organisations) is about 5000—that is, scarcely 1 per cent., while the number of organised working men is 10 per cent. of the total working number. Since then, thanks to the agitation of the Social Democratic pioneers, the number of organised women has been considerably raised, though not so much as could be wished in the interests of female labour.

In Austria there is no legal protection for pregnant women. Even in the last stage of pregnancy women are allowed to do the heaviest work, and we can see them daily, working as builders' labourers, climbing up and down ladders with heavy hods or loads on their heads, pushing or drawing heavy carts, in fact performing every fatiguing and dangerous kind of work. Even did the law forbid it, nothing much would be done, for the poorest, if they could not hide their condition, would at least hide the time of expectancy.

If it is earnestly wished to limit pregnant women with regard to doing heavy work, which is a great danger for the mothers and children of the people, a refuge should be founded where, free from care, they could pass the last months before their delivery. At

the present time a pregnant woman, if she become ill and unable to work, is sent to an hospital, and, barely cured, returns to her harmful work. Should she again become ill, her fate repeats itself, and so again and again, till at length she brings her child into the world either crippled or with the germs of disease or early death.

## Hours of Work in Germany.

**Frau Minna Cauer (Austria).**

IN this paper on the "Hours of Work" for women I must confine myself to Germany, although I know very well that the labour problem and the question of "Hours of Work," so closely connected with it, can be effectively considered only from an international standpoint.

According to the census of 1891 we have in Germany 23½ millions of women who earn their living at agriculture, 1½ millions in manufactories, and about 1½ millions more in other kinds of business. Thus we have in Germany 5 millions of women who are earning their living outside, and a million more who work in their houses. It is difficult to study the conditions of those who work at home; and this is the more to be regretted, as they form an important part of the labour question, and in coming years will excite more and more attention.

The hours of work for women employed in agriculture are, for the most part, beyond our observation, and the conditions of domestic service are so varied that we are not able to judge them.

Laws for the regulation of work in Germany are of recent date, and I need only refer to what has been done since 1891. The Industrial Bill of that year made the following regulations:—

1. That night work is illegal.
2. That work must stop at 8.30 p.m.
3. That work must stop at 5.30 p.m. on Saturdays and on the afternoon before holidays.
4. That women must not be employed during three or four weeks after childbirth; and
5. That women must have 1 hour in the middle of the day for meal-time.

We have in Germany by law an 11 hours' maximum working day for women, and a 10 hours' maximum working day for young people if from 14 to 16 years of age. This is the law, but it is frequently evaded during the busy season.

It is interesting to know from the reports of the factory inspectors that the work done by women is not harmful if the women are allowed periods of rest during work, and if they are allowed to sit as much as possible.

Although the law can influence work in factories, it has, as yet, been unable to penetrate within the home. In the great strike in 1896 among tailors, dressmakers and seamstresses, the terrible misery in which these people largely lived was suddenly revealed in such a startling manner as to arouse the immediate sympathy of society, and it was hoped that the Government would take action, but it did not. The Trade Unions of the Social Democrats, the Evangelical and Catholic Labour Societies, the women of the *bürgerliche Frauenbewegung*, all engaged in trying to better the conditions of those who work at home, have published such facts as they have discovered. It has been shown that husband, wife and children sometimes work from 14 to 17 hours daily, earning by their joint labour from 20 to 30 marks per week.

One of the most interesting developments of women's industry in Germany is the entrance of women into trade, and the new trade law, which will come into force in 1900, makes full provision for this. Statistics for 1895 show a remarkable increase in the number of women who work as bookkeepers, cashiers, etc., in shops and warehouses—100,000 women to 400,000 men—and of these 134,000 are under 20 years of age. This cannot fail to change greatly the conditions of family life in Germany. The hours of work for these women workers are at present irregular, and are not fixed by law; 14, 16, and even 18 hours a day are frequently required, especially from women and girls, who are more easily imposed upon.

Great efforts are being made in Berlin, notably by the Society for Shop Girls, to effect a closing of all shops at 8 o'clock in cities with a population of over 100,000, and to demand for all shop girls a rest of 1½ hours in the middle of the day. Government enacts that Sunday labour shall be limited to 2 hours in the morning (8 to 10), and 2 hours in the afternoon (12 to 2); but this law is often evaded. There are no inspectors, and the enforcement is in the hands of the police. The Government has just introduced a Bill insisting upon a mid-day rest being given

to all employees in business firms ; but when the rest of from 1 to 2 hours has been fixed, there will always remain 13 hours of work, which is too much.

We may sum up the present condition of things thus :—

1. By legislative enactment the maximum working day in factories is 11 hours. The measures taken to enforce this are not effective.
2. There is no time limit for workers at home.
3. Women employed in agriculture, domestic service, in hotels, taverns, etc., are outside legal control as regards hours of labour.
4. The working day of shop girls varies from 13 to 18 hours, but the Government has introduced a Bill to limit the working hours to 10.

What we must work for may be thus summarised :—

1. Regulated hours of labour.  
[The International Labour Congress at Zurich in 1897 demanded that woman's labour should be limited to 8 hours a day and 44 hours a week.]
2. More protection of health.
3. More factory inspectors—especially women inspectors in factories where women's work largely predominates.
4. Sanitary inspectors.
5. Commissions in each country to investigate the condition of working women.
6. The establishment of strong and large organisations as trades unions.
7. The establishment of an International Labour Commission.
8. The demand of an "equal wage" for "equal work."

The great task of solving these labour problems and of making justice to triumph is laid upon humanity.

The economic independence of women will not only bring great changes in the whole economic development of each country, it will also bring many difficult questions for the women themselves to think out and answer. "How far do I belong to myself? How far to my family and my husband? How far to my work and to the world?"

These questionings will awaken bitter conflicts in the hearts of many women, but such times have necessarily to be faced and fought through.

The women's question is an individual one, as well as a national and an international one.

Our opponents cast on us the reproach of being destroyers. Perhaps we do destroy, but destruction has to precede construction. And, besides, there are circumstances in this world which are stronger than ourselves, and we must bow to them.

Finally, my sisters, let us urge that there should be no more legislation adopted without women having a say in the matter. When we speak of "the people," do we mean men only?

Before us lie many new social questions, and new problems demand new energies for their solution. And may we not find these energies in the women who have hitherto had no chance of co-operating?

Let us then go forward and seize every opportunity offered us of casting in our lot with those whose noble aim it is to solve these great problems.

## Women Workers in Russian Factories.

Her Excellency Zeneide Serghievna d'Ivanoff (Russia).

THE question of women workers in Russia is very difficult and complicated. It has not been up to the present time the object of special studies; the latest reports of factory inspectors have not been printed. Besides that, there are very few separate industrial or factory laws for women.

Up to the present day Russian factory labourers do not form a separate distinct class. Many of them are agriculturists who go into factories during the winter to avoid starvation. Most of them hate the factories; and it is no wonder to those who have an idea of the conditions of work in Russia. In general, their wages represent the minimum indispensable to save them from starvation. The following brief sketch will show the principal conditions of workers in the factories of the district of Moscow; they are typical for the greater part of the factories of Central Russia. Let us begin with the dwellings of factory workers.

Most of the factories where working women are employed give gratis a lodging to workers. Their aim is in that case not philanthropic, but practical. Workers living with their families in factory lodgings form a class separated from the land—a class which, in fact, has no property and no home. The factory lodgings generally are very large barracks, with narrow, crooked and dark corridors. The rooms on both sides of the corridors

are either very small rooms, or large common bedrooms. With very few exceptions, we do not find anywhere rules fixing the number of lodgers, either in small rooms intended for separate families, or in large common bedrooms. Very often each person has but six cubic feet of space, sometimes less than that. The only limit which exists is the physical impossibility of placing any more lodgers in the same space. In most of the factories we find both sexes lodging together in the same rooms, on the same beds, made of wooden planks—children and grown-up people, men and women, sleep together. The conditions of workers who hire lodgings in the neighbourhood of factories are much the same; most of these lodgings consist of one or two rooms in a hut—dirty and overcrowded.

Quite as unsatisfactory is the nourishment of workers, women especially. Only those working women can be members of co-operative societies who—and these are rare exceptions—have the same wages as working men. Some other women, with smaller wages, paying the half as members of co-operative societies, are deprived of meat.

Passing to the question of factory wages, it is to be noticed that working women are generally employed in textile trades. Working women, both grown-up and young people, form in that group 83 per cent. of the total; in the non-textile trades we find only 17 per cent. In the non-textile industries women receive very low wages as compared with men.

In nearly all trades women receive low wages comparatively with men. The average monthly payment of women is one-third less—about 20s. (10rou. 35cop.). These figures will be somewhat changed if we exclude highly-paid machinery and building industries, in which women are not employed, and the mat-making industry with very low wages. Excluding these two trades, the monthly wages of men will be about 27s. (13rou. 53cop.), of women, 21s. (10rou. 56cop.)

The highest wages that working women receive are in cotton-spinning industries, where there are 31 per cent. more women than men (7275 women against 5560 men). In these factories the average monthly payment of women is 22s. (11rou.). The weavers receive still more—from 20s. to 35s. (10rou. to 17rou. 50cop.), with an average of 25s. (12rou. 48cop.). In the cotton-spinning industry there is no difference between the wages of men and women. The same equality exists in some industries where women are paid according to the quantity of work done by them, and on the same conditions as men; for instance, in

some branches of the spinning industry. The lowest wages are paid in the cotton-printing (12s.—6rou. 7cop.) and in the mat-making industries.

It is interesting to compare the earnings of working women in Russia with the wages of working women in England and America.

The following table of average monthly wages is given by Mr Dementioff—an authority on the question of factory work.

Fifty copecas I have reckoned as 1s., and I have left out all the odd copecas.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF WAGES.

	Moscow.		England.		Massachusetts.	
	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.	Men.	Women.
Cotton-spinning and Weaving	27/	22/	83/	50/	104/	65/
Bleaching, Dyeing and Cotton-printing . . . . .	27/	13/	67/	36/	110/	58/
Woollen Manufactory . . .	29/	14/	84/	35/	84/	72/
Machinery, Building, etc. .	46/	...	89/	...	133/	57/

The difference, however, between working men and women is much less in Russia than in America and England. The reason of it is the cheapness of factory labour in Russia. When the wages are very low, the minimum, which is necessary to prevent starvation, is nearly the same for both sexes.

One of the most important questions concerning the conditions of working women is the question of working hours. This question has not been as yet satisfactorily solved. In fact, very little has been done. Until 1882 no definite rules or laws for hours of labour in factories were laid down. "Men and women, young people and children," says Professor Tangeoul, "are very often doing the same work, being employed during the day as well as the night. The amount of work during the 24 hours is sometimes as much as 15 and even 17 hours."

"In the factory of the Brothers Roussakoff, in the government of Moscow," says Professor Erismann (1877), "one sees women of all ages, from 14 upwards . . . in rags, with thin, worn-out and prematurely wrinkled faces. . . . They have had no

childhood, nor have they had any youth. Bending at their stands, they work 18 out of 24 hours, receiving for their labour 35 roubles a year. . . ."

The miserable condition of working people in factories gradually attracted general attention. In the beginning of the last decade the necessity of reform was acknowledged by the Government as well as by society, and even by the employers themselves. Several projects of reform were made. In 1882 the institution of factory inspectors was first introduced in Russia, and in the same year a law was passed limiting the hours of labour for children and young people. On June 3, 1885, another law was passed forbidding night work for women, young people and children in textile factories.

With these exceptions very little has been done till lately for the protection of working women. They are generally subjected to the same rules as men; and if we want to know the amount of working hours for women we must study that question in connection with the general conditions of grown-up people.

It is very difficult to define the quantity of factory work in Russia; difficult, first of all, because the number of holidays greatly varies in different factories. In many small factories there are no fixed rules for holidays. The relations between employers and working people are often patriarchal, and the celebration of many holidays in the year depends on different casual circumstances, often upon the arbitrary will of employers as well as of working men.

On the whole the number of holidays varies from 27 to 126 days a year. There is a marked difference between those factories in which machinery is used, and those in which there is only manual labour—factories working by steam have many more working days than factories where manual work is employed. In the former the number of working days is 276 in the average, in the latter, 268.

As regards the number of working hours, we must notice that there is a great difference between various factories and industries. The amount of working hours before the law of June 2, 1897, was  $12\frac{1}{2}$  a day. Before that date, in cloth and woollen-spinning factories, one set of labourers usually worked from 4 in the morning till 8 in the evening, with an interval of 3 hours—that is, they worked 13 hours. They were relieved at 8 o'clock by a second set of night labourers, who worked till 4 in the morning; besides this, the night workers took the places of



the day labourers while the latter were at their meals. This made 11 hours of work during 24 hours. Still worse were the conditions of the mat-workers—they worked 16, sometimes 18, out of 24 hours.

#### WORKING HOURS PER WEEK IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN FACTORIES.

	Cotton-spinning.	Bleaching and Dyeing.	Woollens.	Silks.
England . . . .	56½	55-60	54-59	54-60
Russia . . . .	73-81	64-82	72-82	72-81

Latterly some laws have been passed regulating the length of working hours in Russia. The most important of these is the law of June 2, 1897, fixing 11½ hours as the general rule for working hours for grown-up people. Several months earlier (14th March) another law was introduced forbidding night work for women (from 9 in the evening till 5 in the morning) in the cotton, linen, woollen, flax-spinning and silk industries. The same law was introduced by the law of December 7, 1895, for women working in hemp factories.

The year 1861—the year of abolition of servitude—marks the beginning of a new era in the development of industry and improvement in the condition of the working classes; and a great deal has been already done in Russia for the short period of 38 years. One of the principal signs of progress in modern Russia is the awakening of society to the consciousness of its rights and duties, and in this woman plays an important part.

## Insanitary Conditions amongst Home Workers.

Mrs Florence B. Kelly (United States). Read by Mrs Nathan (United States).

In the United States the work of factory inspection is not a national matter, but is left to each state. Illinois, although as early as 1890 it was the third great manufacturing state in the

United States, enacted its first factory law in 1893, and the department of inspection was created in that year. Governor Altgeld, departing from all precedents, appointed the writer, though a woman, to the position of Chief State Inspector of Factories, with a second woman, Mrs A. P. Stevens, as Assistant Inspector, while the Statute merely required that, of ten deputy inspectors, five must be women.

In general, in Illinois, the whole subject of sanitation is left to the local authorities, factories and workshops as well as dwellings, and the Illinois factory inspection law contains no provisions touching sanitation except in the case of the manufacture of garments, cigars, artificial flowers and purses. Every room in which the manufacture of these articles is carried on is open to the inspectors, who thus enjoy extraordinary powers of search, which can be explained only as part of a measure designed to protect the health of the community, however much it may interfere with the privacy of the kitchens and bedrooms of thousands of people.

The inspectors are authorised to decide whether the houses and shops in which these branches of manufacture are carried on are clean and wholesome, free from contagious and infectious disease, and also from vermin. When they find evidence of infectious or contagious disease present in the workroom, or in the dwelling of which it forms a part, it becomes their duty to issue such orders as the public health may require, and the local Board of Health is empowered *and enjoined* to condemn and destroy the goods thus found.

It is thought that these provisions may be of special interest to European auditors, because the experiment made in this direction by the States of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois has not yet been attempted in the older countries. This paper will therefore be devoted to these aspects of sanitary legislation.

To enable the inspectors to search effectively for garment shops in tenement or dwelling-houses, manufacturers are required by the Statute to keep complete lists of addresses to which their goods are sent to be worked upon, and to give the inspectors access to these lists. Contractors also are required to keep complete and accessible lists of addresses to which they, in turn, send garments to have buttonholes made, braid stitched, handwork finished, or cleaning, pressing or embroidering done.

A penalty, differing in the different States, but amounting in Illinois from \$3 to \$100 for each offence, attaches to the failure to keep these lists complete and correct.

In Illinois and Massachusetts these lists are gathered two to four times a year, and all the shops enumerated in them are searched during the busy season as often as the size of the staff of inspectors permits.

By co-operation with the local Boards of Health, the factory inspectors receive daily lists of all the cases of infectious or contagious diseases occurring, and, by comparing these with the office lists made up from the manufacturers' and contractors' lists of shops, it is easy to see where garment-making may be going on in the same house with scarlet fever, croup, diphtheria, smallpox or consumption. It is only recently that croup and consumption have been placed on the official lists of infectious diseases.

The daily comparison having been made between the Board of Health lists and the office lists of shops, deputy inspectors are detailed to investigate all cases in which there seems to be danger of sickness in a workshop, or in the same house with a workshop.

In an appallingly large number of cases garments are found in the same tenement house with cases of the diseases enumerated, though it is only in the time of epidemic that they are frequently found in the same room or apartment with the patient. I have myself seen over and over again such cases as these :—

1. In one of the worst tenement houses possible a child died of malignant diphtheria, and the mother concealed the fact of the illness and death of the child while she finished in the sickroom a quantity of knee-pants for little boys, and returned them to the contractor and obtained the money wherewith to pay the priest and a part of the funeral expenses.

2. A Sicilian peasant woman was found doing the hand finishing upon a very good cloak, made of light-coloured light-weight cloth, lined with silk. On her lap lay a baby convalescent from scarlet fever, with a large swelling still on its neck and the scales clearly visible on its head and arms. The light soft cape made a pleasant covering for the baby as the mother sewed. A second cape lay near by. The scarlet-fever card was posted on the door. The cloaks belonged to the leading retail merchant of Chicago.

It is, however, by no means only in the case of ready-made cloaks and knee-pants that such exposures occur. On the contrary, they seem to be even more frequent, in proportion, in the houses of skilled tailors—the shop being safer than the home, as indicated by the following items of my observation :—

3. A tailor, in a very clean room in a respectable house in a quiet street, sat sewing one Sunday afternoon on the coat of a

fine evening suit, such as cost \$90 to \$100. On the bed in the same room lay the tailor's son dying of typhoid fever. The suit had been ordered by a customer from one of the leading merchant tailors of Chicago.

4. In a light, clean kitchen in a respectable apartment house, a tailor sat sewing a pair of trousers. The man was skilful at his trade, and his dwelling was a comfortable one. By his side, in a high chair, playing languidly with toys, sat a child, very white and pale, with its throat bandaged. On the door was the diphtheria card of the local Board of Health. The trousers belonged to a leading merchant tailor of Chicago, who was so indignant because they were ordered to be destroyed by the factory inspectors, that he wrote to a daily paper complaining that they were part of a suit for which he was to have had \$65.

5. In a house in the heart of the epidemic-stricken district during the smallpox outbreak of 1894, a tailor was finishing an overcoat, such as sold in that year for \$75 to \$100. The strap in the collar bore the name of the leading merchant tailor in Helena, Montana, a flourishing little city several hundred miles north-west of Chicago. The merchant tailor in Helena had taken the measurements, and wired them, together with the sample number of the cloth, to a great country-order house in Chicago, which cut the coat and was having it made in due order, when the smallpox and the inspection led to its being summarily burned because the tailor's wife lay ill of smallpox in the room adjoining the workroom.

By registration and inspection of shops, and by burning or disinfecting goods which have been exposed to infection, the danger of spreading disease in this way may be reduced, but it cannot fall to zero while work is permitted to be done in dwellings, for the following reasons:—

The temptation to conceal the presence of disease is strong just in proportion as legislation is severe and enforcement effective. The landlord and the fellow-tenants suffer from a quarantine, and willingly connive at concealment. The doctor, if he is eager to extend his practice, as physicians usually are in the districts in which the sewing trades are concentrated, is tempted to keep the case at home instead of insisting upon its going to the hospital, and co-operates with the parents to this end by deferring the diagnosis. He has sometimes a still more sordid reason besides, as for instance where the mother hopes by finishing a batch of garments to get the money for the fees of the doctor and the apothecary. I have known doctors diagnose diphtheria as croup, smallpox as

vaccinia, or as measles (a much less objectionable form of infection from the business point of view than smallpox), scarlet fever as "rash," or "prickly heat," yet treating the patient for the more serious disorder.

Sometimes an honourable physician is unable to recognise at once the nature of the disease, which may be infectious even in the early stages.

Finally, among the very poor—and hand finishing is done only by the very poor—a physician is not called until death seems imminent, and garments may have been carrying infection from the sickroom for a fortnight before any diagnosis whatever can be made.

Thus far we have been discussing the sanitary aspects of tenement-house manufacture from the point of view of the purchaser only. From the point of view of the employee it is objectionable, because it involves the use of foot-power machines instead of steam or electricity; it overcrowds the tenement houses and the tenement districts; and it gathers people from many different crowded houses into one crowded house, whence they may readily carry any infection arising there. As a case in point, I once found a cloak shop in a large rear tenement house. The front and the rear house were alike four storeys high, and 60 people lived in them. Twenty additional people gathered in the shop daily from other houses in the neighbourhood. When I inspected the shop, there were 11 cases of smallpox among the 60 tenants; and the double danger existed that the infection might be carried among the purchasers by the cloaks, and among the neighbouring tenement houses by the employees.

Only when the State effectively prohibits all forms of manufacture in tenements, and requires it to be done in wholesome workrooms constructed for the purpose, will the present insanitary conditions in the garment trades be abolished.

The American factory laws serve their best purpose as showing that it is impossible to keep the sweating system and escape its evil consequences, sanitary and otherwise.

## Women Workers in Factories and Workshops in Canada.

### LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS AGAINST INSANITARY CONDITIONS.

**Miss Mary E. Carty (Canada).**

SPECIAL labour legislation for women is of comparatively recent date, the need for it having arisen as the various trades, handicrafts, etc., have been opened up for them. The range of women's work is steadily increasing; establishments are employing them where a few years ago the idea of their presence would have been considered an impossible thing.

This paper deals with the legislation which has been enacted for women in the Dominion of Canada, especially that which makes the conditions of their life in the shop or workroom more sanitary.

In the province of Ontario, which is the most populous of the provinces, the Factories Act applies to all establishments where five or more women or minors are employed. The Act distinctly states that no young girl or woman can be employed for more than 10 hours in 1 day, or 60 hours in 1 week.

In every factory the employer shall allow the women therein employed not less than 1 hour at noon of each day for meals. No woman shall take her meals in any room wherein manufacturing process is being carried on. Also, if the inspector direct in writing, the employer shall, at his own expense, provide a suitable room or place in the factory in connection therewith for the purposes of a dining or eating-room.

Another section regarding the health of the operatives is that it shall not be lawful to employ in a factory any young girl so that the health of such is likely to be permanently injured. There is a penalty for infringement of this section.

No young girl or woman is allowed to clean such part of the machinery as mill-gearing while the same is in motion.

As regards the more distinctly sanitary provisions, every factory must be kept clean and not overcrowded, and must be ventilated so as to render harmless, as far as practicable, all unwholesome effluvia, to take away dust and other injurious

impurities generated by manufacturing machinery. Separate water-closets must be provided for women, with separate approaches, and must be kept clean and well ventilated at all times. The inspector has the right to take with him into any factory a physician, health officer, or other officers of the local sanitary authority. There is a penalty for keeping a factory so that the safety or health of persons employed is endangered.

The Shops Act for Ontario relates to shops and places other than factories. There was an Act previous to this, not a very satisfactory one, and one under municipal control—that is, municipalities could enforce it or not. Toronto was the only city where it was in force. Miss Carlyle, the woman inspector for factories, found that in the large departmental stores, the department where goods are manufactured, such as underclothing, suits, etc., came under the Factory Act, and she had a supervision of the women and girls working there, but not over the women and girls in the shop department, though in the same establishment. The local councils of women in Ontario took the matter up, and through their efforts the Shops Act as it now stands was passed.

The Ontario Government, realising the very satisfactory work of Miss Carlyle, gave into her hands the working out of the Shops Act as far as women and children were concerned. Several of the sections are the same as the Factory Act, so I shall not repeat them. Seats must be provided for the women and girls, and they must be permitted to use them. A penalty is attached in case any employer, by covert threat, rule, or other intimation, expressed or implied, or by any contrivance prevents any woman or girl from using the seats.

A correct register of the name, age and place of residence of every young girl or woman shall be kept, and such register shall at all times, on demand, be open to the inspector. This Miss Carlyle says in her report she has found very helpful. The sections on ventilation or sanitation are the same as in the Factory Act.

The Factories Act for the province of Quebec is very similar to the one in force in Ontario. One section states that in establishments classified as dangerous, unwholesome, or inconvenient, no woman under 18 shall be employed, and employers must furnish the inspector with a certificate from a health officer that their establishments fulfil all the conditions as to hygiene required by the Act. The sanitary conditions of industrial establishments are under the control of the Board of Health of the province. When, in the opinion of the sanitary physician, the natural or artificial light is insufficient for the re-

quirement of a workshop, he may require the area of windows or the power of artificial light to be increased.

With regard to ventilation during meal times and interruption of work, the workrooms must be vacated, and the air therein renewed by opening of windows.

The women inspectors for Quebec are finding, as was found in Ontario, that the inspection of women's work would be more complete by extending it to shops as well as to factories.

The value of the work of women inspectors is seen on looking over their various reports. A woman enters more into detail than a man. They visit the smaller establishments, which had not, in most cases, been touched by the men inspectors, through want of time, owing to the large number of important factories demanding their supervision, and often it is these smaller workshops where inspection is most needed. The sanitary conditions of factories, workshops and mercantile houses are being much improved in Canada since factory laws were enacted, and on the whole they are well complied with. Miss Carlyle says in her report she does not regard any factory free from danger to health and life. We are aghast at fifty fatal accidents in one year from machinery, yet we do not half realise the untimely deaths of hundreds of working men and women through insanitary conditions. What is the use of efforts to avoid danger in the factory, from the unguarded machinery or elevator, the loom, shuttle belts, pulleys, and other dangerous elements in the mechanical world, if they are not extended to the vastly more important field of ventilation and sanitation. Dangerous machinery is a foe, but a defective sanitary system a greater one. The latter steals its victims by the slower but not less sure method, creeping into the life and pouring out its insidious poison, not only to the destruction of the life of such victims, but all too frequently entailing on society a race of consumptives and weaklings who often become paupers. The lack of ventilation is the most insidious foe, the most dangerous element in factory life. Mere lack of pure air is bad enough, but when the already vitiated atmosphere of a workroom is further impregnated with disease, the danger becomes greater. Then there are the dust and vapours in the chemical works, the cigar factories, tobacco shops, baking and candy works, chenille factories, and, worst of all, the rooms in which old carpets and clothes are torn into shreds for use in the shoddy mills.

The health of no city should be endangered without a vigorous protest if we accept the opinion of reliable medical



authority. The health of any city is most certainly endangered when clothing is allowed to be made in filthy tenement houses, where the sick and the well are huddled together, very often sleeping upon the clothing they make, and allowing it to be sent broadcast through the country.

Miss Carlyle says, in her experience, that the suppression of all but unavoidable overtime would produce a marked improvement in the health and efficiency of women in all lines of business. She strongly advocates a Saturday half holiday, as do the women inspectors for Quebec. At the present time, to have a little time on Saturday, employees are willing to use part of the hour set apart for the noon-day meal. Such arrangement cannot fail to be ultimately injurious to those who hurriedly partake of dinner and rush back to the loom or spindle six days in the week. The Saturday half holiday is becoming more universal in Canada. Many of the large firms are giving their employees the benefit of it. Legislation in this respect would be hailed as a blessing by the employees. It would give working mothers time to attend to their families, and enable the children to enjoy in a large degree fresh air and sunshine.

It is said that Cardinal Manning, in an earnest plea for raising the minimum age for employment of children in England under the new Factory Act from 10 to 12, made this statement "that nations take rank in civilisation according as they legislate for women and children." Such legislation is an advance that never will be lost or abandoned. The effect upon future generations it would be impossible to exaggerate. The great mass of our population belongs to the industrial class. What is gained by them in comfort, health, contentment, leisure and prosperity is the gain of the whole nation.

#### DISCUSSION.

**Miss Irwin** (Secretary of the Glasgow Council of Women's Trades).—Legislation has even a greater importance for women workers than for men, owing to the difficulty in making trades unionism among the former a directly effectual means for remedying their industrial grievances. Many of these are of such a nature and extent that they can be adequately dealt with only by legislation. But as the operation of this remedy is of so permanent and far-reaching a character, it is obviously advisable that exact knowledge of industrial conditions should be obtained before legislation is applied.

It is the growing sense of these things that has probably induced some of the women's industrial societies to so far change their policy and extend their methods of work. And such bodies as the Women's Industrial Council of London, the Glasgow Council for Women's Trades, as well as similar councils in Liverpool and Manchester, have of recent years considerably enlarged and developed their work on lines that include other means for remedying the difficulties and grievances of working women in addition to that of trade organisation, which had formerly been nominally almost the sole object of their work.

At present, owing to the peculiar difficulty in extending trade organisation effectually and permanently throughout women's industries, the attention of the women workers is being more and more directed to the possibilities that lie in industrial legislation for improving industrial conditions, and the marked characteristic of the women's labour movement to-day is the increasing interest shown in Factory Acts, Truck Acts, Shop Hours Acts, and similar enactments. And, from the necessity of their circumstances, the women workers may be said, in a sense, to have brought themselves into line with the new labour school which relies more on parliamentary than trades union action.

It would perhaps be better that I should confine myself to the discussion of one or two definite points in industrial legislation that are now occupying the attention of women's labour societies, and in respect to which they are desirous of seeing the law amended. *First.* With regard to hours of work. It has been aptly said that not only do the workers require sufficient wages to live *on*, they must have sufficient time to live *in*.

I am of opinion that the hours worked even in many industries coming under the Factory Acts are much too long, while the nominal hours are, as we all know, greatly increased both by legal and illegal overtime. With regard to those industries that do not (or did not until recently) come under the Acts, I will take the case of the laundries. A few years ago I made an investigation throughout Scotland into the conditions of women's employment in laundries, and I found that frequently women and girls were engaged in these places for 15, 16 and 17 hours at a stretch. I found cases in which they had even been employed 24 and 37½ hours at a stretch—that is to say, they started at 9 on Friday morning, worked all Friday and Friday night, and on until 6 or 7 on Saturday evening.

As a result of the agitation made concerning these excessive hours, a clause was inserted in the 1895 Factory Act, which

aimed at some measure of legal restriction for the hours of laundry employees. This provision we feel, however, to be quite inadequate, and most unsatisfactory. Not only is the legal maximum day—14 hours for women, exclusive of meal hours—very long in view of the heavy and exhaustive nature of laundry work, but it requires very little reflection to see how very difficult—in fact how practically impossible it is—to regulate the hours when the legal period of employment is merely defined as a stretch of so many hours per day, or week, instead of its being limited between two fixed points of a certain hour before which work may not be commenced, and another hour beyond which it may not be continued.

The difficulty of regulating the hours under such a provision is further complicated, if not rendered impossible, by Clause V. of Sub-sec. 1, Sec. 22, of the 1895 Act, which allows the period of employment to be varied from day to day before commencing work. The result of which may be that when an inspector visits a laundry, say at 12 midnight, and finds work still going on, he may be told that work did not begin that day until 12 noon, and he has no means for ascertaining whether this is so or not—short of questioning the workers. And we feel very strongly that the onus of producing proof of evasion of the Act should not devolve on them. Nor (in the absence of some form of automatic register) has the inspector any direct means of ascertaining whether the weekly limit of hours has been exceeded or not—short of watching the laundry for an entire week. In consequence of this and other defects in the special clauses relating to laundries, we are now urging, therefore, that the general provisions of the Factory Acts should be extended to these places of employment.

Then with regard to what is technically called Home Work—namely, the work which is sometimes taken home by workers who are employed in the factory or workshop. The clauses in the Act that deal with this matter are most unfortunately worded. What, of course, is aimed at is the restriction within reasonable limits of the hours given to the work which is taken home by the workshop operatives, so that the latter shall not be employed by this extra work taken home for a longer period than they would have been if they had remained in a workshop closing at the legal hour. But what may happen is this. A factory or workshop may send its workers home at 6 p.m., while the law allows it to remain open until 8 p.m. According to the Act the workers are only allowed to take home work that

will occupy them until 8 p.m. (the legal hour for closing). But it is impossible for an inspector so to time his visit as to catch the workers at the moment at which they are being sent home, and even if he did catch them how would it be possible for him to prove that the shirts, or what not they were taking home, would not employ them beyond 8 o'clock? The difficulty of carrying out what was no doubt the intention of the Act has been fully recognised in some quarters, and I heard recently that one of the largest firms in Glasgow, who had a conscientious desire to comply with the law, and who felt the impossibility of doing so with the present provisions, have stopped the giving home of work to their factory hands altogether. And I am strongly of opinion that it is desirable to stop by law this practice of taking work home after hours. It indirectly tends to lower wages by producing an artificial standard of output, and it seems to me that if a woman has worked for her legal limit of hours in a workshop she ought to make her "living wage," or rather a "comfort wage," without being required to sacrifice her social and family life to gain it. It is only fair to say that the workers themselves are often more anxious to take this home work than employers are to give it even. One manager said to me, "Our workers would steal this extra work if they could." But there is little reason to dispute that this is due to the very low earnings—not to the greed but to the need of the worker. As the workers have told me again and again, "We *must* take extra work to earn a living."

Then as to the hours worked in shops. According to the Shop Hours Act now in force a limit is fixed to the hours during which young persons under 18 may be employed. Above that age they may be worked for any stretch of hours. Now, even as the Act applies to young persons under 18, it is objectionable. First, because the limit is 74 hours a week, and that is too long; and second, because (as everyone knows) a weekly limit is practically no limit at all, and without a daily limit (with a fixed hour at each end of it) it is almost impossible to check any evasion of the law. During an investigation made into the employment of women in shops, I found numerous cases in which women were employed 15, 16, and even 17 hours at a stretch, the weekly totals amounting to over 90, and in some cases to over 100 hours per week. In many shops the girls came in at 8 in the morning, and stayed till 12 every night. They never had a short evening in the week, they never had any regular time for meals, and they were never

allowed to sit down during all the long weary hours they were on duty.

And it is here that I would venture to impress on members of such associations as this the importance that labour questions hold for them. The trend of things in the political world sets always more and more strongly in the direction of social and industrial legislation, and such measures as Factory Bills, Shop Hours Bills, Truck Act Bills, Employer's Liability Bills, and others that affect the relations between employer and employee, are rapidly increasing in importance and significance. And in view of what we hope is also coming—the increased political responsibilities of women by the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise—it seems to me of the first importance that they should fit themselves for the time when they will be admitted to the counsels of the nation by a careful and systematic study of facts, and that such expression of opinion as they may give should be inspired not by a mere vague sympathy, but should rest on sound practical knowledge of social and industrial conditions.

Miss Bondfield (Secretary of the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks).—The “living-in” system, *i.e.*, the system by which employers board and lodge their assistants, as part payment of wage, is responsible for much of the ill-health suffered by workers in shops. The hurried meals served frequently in badly-ventilated underground dining-rooms, with a too close proximity of drains (!) results, in the case of women especially, in a loss of appetite, and consequently in an actual insufficiency of food necessary for the preservation of health. For instance, in most large business houses the time allowed for breakfast and tea is 20 minutes; for dinner, 30 minutes; making a break of a little over an hour altogether in the long day's work of 11 to 14 hours, and that break is spent in “bolting” food, which is unpalatable, amid the hubbub of many voices, the clatter of plates, and surroundings of the most depressing character. The majority of assistants who lived “in” were not allowed to leave the business premises from the time they commenced work to the time the day's work was done. The air, even in well-ventilated shops, is usually thick with fine particles dislodged by the continual shifting of goods. When work is done for the day there is no refuge for the weary woman who is too tired to walk, and cannot afford a ride, except the stuffy sitting-room shared in common—and frequently resembling the third-class waiting-room of a railway station—or the still more stuffy bedroom also shared in common!

It is not difficult to imagine that even strong constitutions give way after a few years spent under such conditions; and when one realises that the system is not necessary for the proper conduct of business—it does not exist in Scotland—but is the result of neglect on the part of the workers concerned to guard their own interests, and the consequent ignorance and indifference of the great shopping public, we should surely be prepared to use what little influence we possess towards the abolition of this pernicious system.

More inspection, not only of drains, but of ventilation, of cubic space per person in the shop warehouse, and, above all, in the sleeping apartments provided for assistants; definite and adequate meal-times fixed by the State, would greatly hasten this end.

**Miss Clementina Black** pointed out that **Miss Irwin** had spoken of the necessity of facts to go upon. That moment seemed to her (the speaker) to be an unusual opportunity to speak to a number of women of all countries, and an opportunity of urging upon them the necessity of personal investigation in the conditions of life of the working women of their countries. The Women's Industrial Council had taken steps in that direction, and she urged upon her hearers to do the same, so that the next time there was a National Congress there might be an opportunity of comparing all those facts collected from all sorts of places and all countries. The value of information was doubled or trebled when it was confirmed in another quarter. Workers who were endeavouring to gain that information should do it in such a form that it would be comparable with the results of other labours. She would like to suggest that they should unite with the Women's Industrial Council, in order that they might try and put the statistics into such a shape as would render them easy for comparison. One of the greatest needs in England was the want of a large body of authentic facts about women's work. She earnestly urged upon those present to help the Women's Industrial Council to collect facts upon which they might arrive at a conclusion as to whether it would be better to agitate for or against legislation.

**Lady Knightley of Fawsley** said she could not help putting before them what was often considered the unpopular side of the question, viz., how far special legislation for women might affect their being employed at all. They would not do women any good if they harassed the employers by continual

legislation which would force them to employ men rather than women. She could not help thinking that it should be their aim and object to reduce the long working hours, to obtain adequate pay for overtime, and to secure good sanitary conditions equally for men and women.

## SPECIAL LABOUR LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN.

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### (B) THE ATTITUDE OF DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT.

GREAT HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

*TUESDAY, JUNE 27, AFTERNOON.*

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LADY LAURA RIDDING in the Chair.

[A telegram was communicated to the meeting from Conseiller Bernardino Machado, late Minister of Industries in Portugal, expressing his regrets at being unable to be present, and conveying his salutations and best wishes to the Congress.]

### Protective Legislation in Germany.

Fraulein Salomon (Germany).

"By means of legislation the exact balance must be produced between a pair of scales, into one of which the power of wealth has thrown its sword."

These words of the well-known Swiss lawyer, Mr Bridel, have special importance, and the necessity to balance the scales is twofold, wherever the work of women is found in one of the scales.

The legislation of most manufacturing States has acknowledged this necessity in special laws for protecting working women, by means of which the States try to protect the life and health of women in their special capacity as women and as mothers of the future generations.



The motives which led to such measures in Germany (as in many other States) are to be looked for in the immense increase of women workers, which became, by the hurtful influence of industrial work upon the female organism, not only a danger to women but even to the State. In 1895 there were 1½ million women working in German industry, that is 400,000 women more than in 1882. The nature of different trades, the kind of some industrial occupations, the state of health in which women work before and after confinement, the length of work-time, night work, all these forms of women's work which endanger public health and public welfare, gave the initiative for special labour legislation, which historically succeeds the factory laws for children and precedes the labour legislation for adult men.

The legislation originates in the modern forms of production. The first attempts in Germany date from 1878; in its present form it is enacted from the first of April 1892.

The *special* laws for the protection of women extend in the main only to factories, and under certain conditions to workshops; the principal items (clauses) are:—

The employment of women is prohibited for four weeks after confinement, and for the two following weeks, except with a medical certificate; the hours of work for women over 16 years may not exceed 11 hours a day, and on Saturdays and the days preceding a holiday 10 hours; night-work between 8.30 p.m. and 5.30 a.m. is interdicted, as is also underground work.

The "Bundesrat" (being the representatives of the federated governments) is invested with the power of prohibiting or issuing certain conditions concerning the employment of women for such branches of industry as are especially dangerous to health or morals. The "Bundesrat" has made occasional use of this privilege; different restrictions have been fixed for brick kilns, glass manufactories and others.

The factory inspectors of Germany generally go in for an enlargement of the special labour legislation for women, finding the effect of these attempts satisfactory for women as well as harmless for the development of industry.

The organised women-workers and their trade unions agitate likewise for a further improvement and exact performance of this legislation; the civic women's movement, as far as it is represented by the National Council, also moves in favour of its further expansion.

In Parliament these claims have been represented energetically by the Social Democratic Party, amongst whom the move-

ment of the working women is carried on; as far as the representatives of other political parties take a warm interest in and understand the reform demands on the part of the labouring classes, that is especially in the liberal parties, the claims for improvement of the labour legislation for women have been seconded. The Government also has recognised the necessity of regulating the conditions of labour through the State since 1890.

A peculiar movement, which is intimately connected with, or perhaps even produced by, the endeavours for special labour legislation for women, has been devised by the Centrum—a movement which aims at the complete interdiction of employment of married women in factories.

Unfortunately this demand, which sprang from the wish of withholding social equality from women, and restricting them to house and household work, found adherents in the ranks of well-meaning social reformers, who in this way hope to oppose the hurtful influences which are connected with the industrial work of women.

This view of things, which was expressed with special emphasis at the International Congress for protective labour legislation in Turin 1897, must be protested against energetically and principally in the interest of the working women as an encroachment on their economical liberty.

Women of all classes must combine to reject this as well as any other attempt to keep working women out of the labour market, on the part of the State or of the workers, in consideration of competition or from social motives; for economic independence from men can alone procure social equality for women.

Such an interdiction would deprive married women of the possibility of economical independence or would drive them into the unprotected home industry with lower prices, longer hours and worse conditions. To turn them out of the factories means, in the economic standard of to-day—not to turn them back into the domestic sphere, because it does not prevent the motives from existing which cause the women to abandon home and children.

On that account such laws would only create worse conditions for women's labour; it would guarantee them exploitation instead of protection; it would bring forth decrease of marriages, increase of concubinage, and would ruin family life instead of strengthening it.

Though, on the one hand, such attempts and claims to limit their liberty of action are eagerly opposed by German women,

they are, in spite of all their righteous struggles for independence, on the other hand convinced that by complete lack of law the self-dependence of women would not be secured, but the employers' liberty for taking the advantage of it for exploitation.

A strong movement to suppress special labour legislation for women would on that account hardly gain ground in Germany. Such feminine efforts would strongly be opposed by the organised women-workers as well as by all those representatives of the women's movement, who have a keen knowledge of the conditions in which the women of the working classes work and live, because such claimants fully mistake the interest of the working women. We earnestly hope that also the protective legislation for adult men, which is recognised and carried out by our labour legislation (R. Q. O.) from the first of June 1891, will be further developed; but we think that there is a great distinction between the wants of workmen and workwomen, the distinction that only by means of State protection the working women can be enabled to protect themselves, to organise themselves in like manner as the labouring men of the period of capitalistic evolution from the very beginning and when taking up the struggle for their standard of life.

On that account we believe in the necessity of special labour legislation for women, but we are convinced (and the experience of the last few years proved this belief) that the factory laws for women, especially the limitation of their factory day, cannot fail to bring with them, after a short time, a shortening of the hours of the adult men with whom they work as well.

Women will not be worked out of the labour market on account of such restrictions, because employers cannot spare them any more. Their peculiar skill in certain trades and occupations will compel the employers in many trades to manage their business according to the terms (conditions) which the law appoints for the employment of women. Moreover, such legislation will produce for the labouring classes what we must struggle to attain for all classes of humanity—a division of work according to sex on account of special qualities; it will put in place of a mechanical or organic division of work a division according to characters and constitutions! Also the sphere of industrial work has space for the peculiarities of both sexes, and we hope that special labour legislation for women is one of the means for securing influence for these peculiarities in daily life.

May happier and better periods improve the conditions of all women to such a degree that they have to endure no social distress.

But we dare not wait for such a time in idleness, our task is pointed out to us by the present time; may a thorough insight guide us in the right way.

## Special Legislation for Women.

**Mrs Sidney Webb (Great Britain).**

I HAVE been asked to describe the position with regard to factory legislation which is taken up by the English Factory Acts, supported by the trade unionists, both men and women, and now generally accepted by progressive public opinion. Let me say once for all that I am myself personally convinced of the necessity of regulating the minimum conditions of employment of all classes of wage-earners, men, women and children, in all respects and in every trade. But I do not wish to evade the issue raised by the words "special legislation for women." Women philanthropists and women wage-earners have cordially accepted from Parliament regulations from which men have been exempted—not because men ought to have been exempted, but as a useful instalment of reform. This is a question of political expediency. But this is not all. We assert that in some cases legislation specially adapted to the particular needs of women, and not of general application, is permanently desirable. This is a question of economic principle.

It is unnecessary for me to enter at any length into the argument in favour of general factory legislation. We believe that a century of experience has proved what economic theory now demonstrates, that if we leave the conditions of employment absolutely unregulated—if, that is, we let them be determined by individual bargaining between employer and wage-earner—that the sanitary condition of the workshop will become such as to breed disease in the operative, and infection for the rest of the community; that the hours of labour will be gradually lengthened until the life of the wage-earner becomes one unceasing toil; and that the wages will be progressively reduced, so that the wage-earners as a class will be without the nourishment necessary for their continued efficiency. We object to any such degradation of the wage-earning class not only, and perhaps not even mainly, because we are moved by the sufferings of particular men, women and children; but because their degrada-

tion hampers us as a nation in our struggle with other nations for manufacturing and commercial pre-eminence.

Industrial success depends ultimately upon making the factors of production as efficient as possible. The ordinary manufacturer knows this about his own machinery. He may be tempted, in the struggle for immediate cheapness of production, to stint his outlay for repairs and renewals. But the result is that he succumbs to his wiser rival who keeps his machinery at the highest pitch of perfection. In the case of machinery, Nemesis comes too quickly to the individual manufacturer for him to go far wrong. He cannot throw his old machine out of the window and find a new one in the street free of any expense to himself. But with regard to the human machines—the men, women and children whom he employs—it may positively pay him to use up successive relays of workers, throwing them, when exhausted, on the rubbish heap of charity or the Poor Law, and taking in a new generation at his mill gate. But this does not pay the community. Hence we enact a long code of factory legislation so as to ensure that, in the mad race for immediate cheapness, the most important of all the factors in production, the human beings, shall not be unduly depreciated in value, but shall, on the contrary, be progressively increased in efficiency. Thus it is a positive advantage to England, Germany and Switzerland, in the struggle for international trade, that they already enforce systematic factory legislation. We in England are only slowly realising how great this advantage is, and hence our factory code is still imperfect. When we have fully understood this economic law we shall insist on enforcing a legal minimum for all workers, not only as regards sanitation, education and leisure, but also as regards wages.

Now I come to the cases in which Parliament has passed or will pass a factory act applying to women, but refuses to apply it to men. Are we, who believe in factory legislation, right in accepting this instalment of reform? I say unhesitatingly, yes. I do not base my acceptance on the fact that, in many cases, a law which professes to apply only to women, does, as a matter of fact, impose the same regulation on the men who work in the same mill. This has, as you all know, been the result in our great cotton industry. But this may be an accident. It does not, for instance, hold good of the printing trade. We are in favour of accepting an instalment because we believe in our main argument that regulation positively improves the economic and social position of the

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ground mines, or take the night-shift in a factory, without serious deterioration of health or character, whereas men can do so and yet retain a high standard of citizenship, it is not in the interests of women to insist that they should be free to do what the men do. I need hardly say that this principle applies in all ways. It would be suicidal for the men compositors' trade union, for the sake of keeping women out of the trade, to allow their members to accept wages below the man's standard of life. We must, in fact, get rid of this idea of sex rivalry. Each distinct class of workers, whether men or women, or both together, must insist on enforcing the particular minimum conditions which their particular circumstances render necessary. These will differ from trade to trade, from age to age, and occasionally from sex to sex. Without the enforcement of such minimum conditions as will protect every set of workers, whether men or women, from physical and mental deterioration, the nation will not reach its maximum strength, and women, therefore, will fail to attain their maximum development.

## Sur le Travail des Femmes.

Mme. Bélilon (France).

Nous voyons que dans toutes les classes, l'homme cherche à faire interdire le travail à la femme, le travail rétribué s'entend ! En France nous en avons eu des preuves successives. On connaît la déclaration de l'Ordre des avocats qui refusa d'admettre Mlle. Jeanne Chauvin bien qu'elle eût passé ses examens et conquis tous les grades conférant le droit de plaider. Les étudiantes en médecine rencontrent encore beaucoup de mauvais vouloir. Dans l'industrie cet esprit misogynique sévit avec la même fureur ; le syndicat des confiseurs a déclaré qu'il protestait hautement contre l'admission des femmes dans l'industrie ; celui des dessinateurs sur étoffe a mis à l'index les maisons qui avaient osé occuper des personnes n'appartenant pas au sexe masculin ; celui des typographes mène depuis nombre d'années une campagne plus ou moins chevaleresque pour arriver à fermer complètement les portes des imprimeries à l'élément féminin. Ce dernier syndicat a avoué que l'égalité de salaire ne le désarmerait point attendu que la guerre entreprise par lui n'a d'autre raison que la haine de ses membres contre

les femmes. En effet, leur sentiment est le même que celui des avocats et des médecins qui, on le sait, ne pensent pas à des questions de salaire lorsqu'il repoussent la femme. Seulement comme cette haine n'est pas un argument à faire valoir dans une assemblée législative, il a fallu chercher autre chose. Cette autre chose, les électeurs ouvriers l'ont trouvée. Ils ont exigé de leurs mandataires une loi forçant les patrons à remplacer les ouvrières par des ouvriers. En effet la loi de 1892 qui réglemente les heures de travail des femmes et leur interdit de travailler la nuit a donné les résultats attendus. Ecœurés de se voir dresser procès verbal et de payer des amendes dès qu'une commande pressée les forçait de faire veiller leur personnel féminin plus tard que l'heure réglementaire, les patrons ont remercié les ouvrières qu'ils ont remplacées par des membres du sexe fort—tres fort, en effet, quand il s'agit de machinations contre la femme, car pour faire passer cette loi ils se sont servi du masque de la protection ; ils ont ainsi trompé les députés bien intentionnés ; ils ont trompé l'intéressée elle-même. On a parlé d'hygiène de mortalité infantile de dépopulation. On a exploité la fibre patriotique ! Ah ! oui nous en avons entendu, des phrases, des rapports. On est allé jusqu'à nous dire que sur 142 travailleuses en état de grossesse 169 avaient mis au monde des enfants morts ou non viables ! Oh ! les beautés de la statistique et les effets prodigieux du surmenage !

Il faut aussi faire remarquer que ceux qui prétendent manifester ainsi leur sollicitude pour l'avenir de la race ne combattent point l'alcoolisme. Cette constatation a encore été faite cette année au dernier congrès anti-alcoolique tenu à Paris. Dans les congrès ouvriers où l'on tonne contre le travail des femmes il n'est jamais question de cette plaie sociale. Cependant chacun sait combien l'alcoolisme est funeste à la race. Eh bien ! comme remède, on propose sans cesse d'empêcher la femme de manger, mais on ne parle jamais d'interdire à l'homme de boire.

Où il est dans l'intérêt de la race que l'on veut saine et forte ; c'est pour relever le pays que l'on veut digne et fier qu'il faut rendre les mauvaises mœurs obligatoires en ôtant à la femme le droit au travail ! c'est dans l'intérêt de l'humanité, de la morale qu'il faut placer la femme sous la domination de l'homme et la forcer à lui demander son pain !

Faire dépendre la femme de l'homme, sait on bien ce que c'est ? De toutes les iniquités, c'est la plus odieuse ! oui, car si l'inégalité qui existe entre les classes est injuste elle n'est qu'injuste tandis que celle que l'on a établie entre les sexes est, avec cela,



profondément immorale, et à part qu'elle est immorale, en soi, elle entraîne avec elle l'immoralité. Oui, ce n'est pas seulement un attentat contre le principe de liberté, ce n'est pas seulement la force primant le droit c'est encore la toute puissante de la femme par la faveur de l'homme, c'est le vice primant le mérite et la vertu. L'obligation pour la femme de demander son pain à l'homme, c'est le règne de la prostitution et ce qui est pis, le règne de la prostituée. Ah ! nous en avons assez de ce régime d'abjection. Nous demandons aux vaillants défenseurs de notre cause, aux courageuses revendicatrices dignes de ce nom d'éclairer les esprits qui se laissent circonvenir par cette prétendue pitié pour la femme *qui se fatigue*. . . . pitié dont on fait étalage à l'aide de mots scientifiques et de statistiques fantaisistes. Il faut faire comprendre aux personnes qui s'apitoient à ces récits qu'elles s'attendrissent à tort, et que les torrents de larmes qu'elles voient verser sur le sort des femmes qui travaillent ne sont que des pleurs du crocodile de notre fabuliste Florian. Le crocodile sanglotait après avoir mangé un enfant. mais c'était—de regret d'en avoir laissé échapper un autre.

Veillez, je vous prie, constater la bonne foi de ces prétendus humanitaristes : Dans les imprimeries les femmes qui composaient des journaux de nuit ont été renvoyées. Je citerai entre autres imprimeries de Paris celle des Arts et Manufactures qui occupait plus de 200 compositrices typographes et qui à l'heure présente n'en emploie plus que 14 ; celle où s'imprime le *Journal des Femmes* qui a dû pour la même raison substituer également des compositeurs à ses compositrices. Eh bien ! dans ces mêmes imprimeries où elle est chassée de l'atelier de typographie, la femme peut passer dans la pièce voisine et y rester sept heures de nuit à plier le journal qu'il lui a été interdit de composer même pendant cinq minutes. La loi le lui permet. Pourquoi ? dira-t-on. Mais parce que le pliage étant fort peu rétribué n'est pas convoité par l'homme. Alors la femme peut le faire. Cette crainte terrible de lui voir épuiser ses forces a disparu.

À ce sujet, il est juste de rappeler que dernièrement les tribunaux (sur les plaintes réitérées des féministes), ont apporté quelques tempérants à la rigueur de cette loi. Nous remercions les magistrats, ils ont fait ce qu'ils ont pu, mais c'est tout à fait insuffisant.

Autre chose : le texte qui déclare que cette loi sera appliquée aux maisons de commerce spécifie qu'il doit être permis aux femmes employées dans les brasseries de passer la nuit dans ces maisons. Est ce donc que là le travail est plus sain ?

ou bien parce que les patrons de ces établissements sont plus intéressants que ceux des établissements d'un autre genre et qu'il ne faut pas les gêner dans leur industrie? Serait-ce enfin parce que les dits établissements doivent absolument fonctionner méritant d'être reconnus d'utilité publique? Toujours est-il que là on ne voit plus aucun danger pour la santé des femmes, pour l'avenir de la race, pour la sécurité de la patrie.

Tout ce que je vous dis est bien pâle en regard des remarquables exposés qu'a faits Mme. Maria Martin dans le *Journal des Femmes* en 1895 et 1896, époque où tant de malheureuses ouvrières ont été jetées sur le pavé. A ce sujet, M. Mesureur, député de Paris, ancien ministre du commerce et de l'industrie, alors président de la Commission du travail, s'exprimait en ces termes :

" Il était à prévoir que cette loi créerait certaines difficultés et provoquerait de grands mécontentements parmi celles en faveur de qui elle a été votée. De nombreuses grèves de femmes se sont même produites.

" Dans certaines industries où hommes et femmes peuvent être employés, les patrons n'hésiteront pas, afin d'éviter tout ennui, à remplacer les ouvrières par des ouvriers. Il en est résulté naturellement, une gêne dans de nombreux ménages.

" Des pétitions furent adressées à la Commission supérieure du travail, à la Chambre, au Sénat.

" En ce qui concerne la femme particulièrement, pour qui la lutte pour la vie est plus difficile que pour l'homme, toute entrave apportée au travail lui fait perdre un peu de terrain acquis par ses droits, car l'homme la remplace immédiatement "

Ce sont là les propres paroles de M. Mesureur.

A Berlin, 7000 ouvrières se sont réunies pour protester énergiquement contre la loi. On a passé outre, bien entendu !

Mrs Avery et Mrs MacNaughton, féministes canadiennes, après avoir étudié la question ont conclu qu'il fallait combattre la loi réglementant les heures du travail *des femmes seulement* attendu qu'elle n'avait eu d'autre résultat que de réduire la plupart à la famine.

Et il est encore des personnes qui réclament l'application de la loi en se déclarant féministes !

Ah ! il est facile de les reconnaître, les vrais féministes, lorsque la discussion est appelée sur ce terrain ils ne disent pas, car ils n'ont pas à dire s'ils sont pour la réglementation ou pour la liberté du travail, ils considèrent que c'est une question absolument à côté et au sujet de la loi dont nous parlons, ils se

prononcent tous dans le même sens : ils la repoussent, cela au nom du principe de l'égalité des sexes devant le droit, principe violé par la dite loi comme par tant d'autres, hélas !

Nous ferons aussi remarquer que ceux qui nous combattent en prétendant soutenir la cause des femmes ; qui déclarent réclamer la réduction de la journée de travail pour tout le monde et accepter qu'on *commence*, comme ils disent *par les femmes* (cela sans trouver le moins du monde à redire aux conséquences qui en découlent pour celles-ci) nous ferons remarquer que ceux-là blâment avec véhémence les malheureuses qui acceptent un salaire minime, prétendant qu'elles font du tort aux hommes, comme si ce n'était pas la faute de ces derniers lesquels accaparent tout ce qui est avantageux et font que la femme est encore très heureuse quand elle trouve une porte ouverte . . . a-t-elle le moyen d'être exigeante, elle qui ne peut exercer ni fonctions publiques, ni professions libérales, ni métiers rétribués. On change les rôles : ce n'est pas la femme ainsi qu'on le prétend qui fait que le travail de l'homme est insuffisamment payé, c'est l'homme qui par suite de l'ostracisme dont il a frappé la femme est cause que celle-ci ne peut arriver à faire rétribuer le sien raisonnablement. Et pour conjurer le mal on redouble d'hostilités ! mais l'on va contre son but ! car si le système homeopathique est bon en médecine, en matière sociologique il ne vaut rien. On ne remédie pas à un mal en se servant de nouveau et à outrance de ce qui a amené ce mal. Il serait au contraire aussi rationnel qu'équitable d'ouvrir toutes les portes toutes grandes aux femmes et alors il n'y aurait pas plus de différence de prix que de distinction de sexe.

Puisqu'ils se fâchent contre la femme qui, selon eux, devrait refuser tout maigre salaire afin qu'il ne soit pas fait de tort aux hommes, pourquoi les partisans de la loi qui réglemente le travail des femmes ne s'indignent-ils pas lorsqu'ils voient les ouvriers prendre la place des ouvrières renvoyées rapport à cette loi qu'ils ont eux-mêmes fait édicter ? Pas du tout ! cependant, s'ils étaient logiques, les syndicats masculins décideraient de refuser le travail offert dans ces conditions ! cette protection, comme on l'appelle, ne serait plus une ironie. On ne pourrait jeter la femme sur le pavé, on n'imposerait plus la faim à son estomac sous prétexte de donner le repos à ses membres ; enfin, habituant la clientèle à se plier aux exigences de cette mesure, les ouvriers hâteraient le moment où sera instituée cette réglementation générale qu'ils réclament à grands cris.

Fidèle à notre principe, nous ne nous prononçons point au

sujet de cette réglementation nous n'abandonnons pas le terrain féministe et nous nous bornons à réclamer pour la femme la même liberté que pour l'homme.

Mais pouvons nous espérer qu'il sera fait droit à notre demande tant que nous n'aurons pas de représentant au Parlement? Les députés des hommes, qu'ils soient féministes ou non, ne peuvent que peu de chose pour nous car il faut avant tout qu'ils obéissent à leurs électeurs et c'est une utopie d'espérer que ceux-ci seront tous féministes.

Donc la clef qui doit ouvrir toutes les portes aux femmes, le véritable palladium qui assurera leur liberté et le respect de leurs droits, c'est le bulletin de vote parlementaire. Je termine en déclarant que nous le réclamons avec toute la force de notre conviction, avec toute l'ardeur indignée que nous inspire le sentiment de nos droits méconnus.

## The Drawbacks of Special Legislation.

Baroness Alexandra Gripenberg (Finland).

I NEED not dwell on the fact that the working women's position needs alterations. It is a foregone conclusion that, in this assembly, we all agree on that point. But to introduce restrictions on women's labour as a remedy seems to me most certainly to be to begin from the wrong end. Restrictions are in opposition to one of the chief principles of our times, the right to self-determination for the individual, which principle most certainly involves the right for the grown-up man and woman to choose their own work and its conditions. No good can come from this principle being abandoned, even if it be in the name of humanity. But these restrictions are also the destroying wind which already in its bud kills women's hope for equal rights. We cannot ask for privileges for women on the ground of their sex and at the same time want them to be recognised as men's equals before the law. I know that my opponent may say, "Then, let us desert the theory of equal rights, we must have our working women protected." But all the human rights which are included in the equal right system, are they not as important for the working women as for us others? And can we pull away one of the cornerstones of the building without damaging the whole?

The idea of special labour legislation for women is an outcome of the old principle that women must have privileges, not rights, that they must be protected instead of having the power to protect themselves, that they are—as the national economists say—“A people’s most precious property,” instead of forming a part of the people itself. Those who ask for equal rights condemn this system of guardianship as unjust and disastrous for both men and women. They ask for grown-up women the same right to protect themselves and decide for themselves in all phases of life as the grown-up man has. A protecting system can never be compared with the advantages of an equal right system. Has not the constant guardianship under which women have been compelled to live hitherto produced fruits so bitter that friends of women ought to take care before they should dare to support it in any shape? With what right do we interfere with grown-up women at every step of their lives? By what right do we say to one woman, “You must not work because you are married;” or to another, “You must not do that or that because you are a woman, or because you are a rich woman, or because you are a woman who has children”? Indeed, it is arrogance to presume that women have no discrimination whatever to understand how and when to work.

Women were driven away from home work when factories and workshops took up the greatest part of the manufacture hitherto carried on at home. Now they are being driven away, slowly but surely, from the factories and workshops. For every new restriction and regulation concerning women’s work makes it more difficult for working women to get employment with decent wages, because it is always the less skilful workers who suffer first when the employers are burdened with all kinds of rules and restrictions concerning them. We all know that women are less skilful than men. They have not, as a rule, the same opportunities to get a thorough training and to choose between all lines of work as men have. Why not then begin from the safer end, and give women better opportunities of getting a thorough training, by extending their rights to choose their times of work, and, before all, by hastening the introduction of good hygienic regulations *for men and women alike*? In most cases the chief disabilities would be removed in the shortest time if greater cleanliness and modern hygienic methods were enforced. As an example, I will mention that in the potteries and china factories of Sweden and Finland such arrangements for safety are made *for men and women alike*. That in the

ment of the working women is carried on; as far as the representatives of other political parties take a warm interest in and understand the reform demands on the part of the labouring classes, that is especially in the liberal parties, the claims for improvement of the labour legislation for women have been seconded. The Government also has recognised the necessity of regulating the conditions of labour through the State since 1890.

A peculiar movement, which is intimately connected with, or perhaps even produced by, the endeavours for special labour legislation for women, has been devised by the Centrum—a movement which aims at the complete interdiction of employment of married women in factories.

Unfortunately this demand, which sprang from the wish of withholding social equality from women, and restricting them to house and household work, found adherents in the ranks of well-meaning social reformers, who in this way hope to oppose the hurtful influences which are connected with the industrial work of women.

This view of things, which was expressed with special emphasis at the International Congress for protective labour legislation in Turin 1897, must be protested against energetically and principally in the interest of the working women as an encroachment on their economical liberty.

Women of all classes must combine to reject this as well as any other attempt to keep working women out of the labour market, on the part of the State or of the workers, in consideration of competition or from social motives; for economic independence from men can alone procure social equality for women.

Such an interdiction would deprive married women of the possibility of economical independence or would drive them into the unprotected home industry with lower prices, longer hours and worse conditions. To turn them out of the factories means, in the economic standard of to-day—not to turn them back into the domestic sphere, because it does not prevent the motives from existing which cause the women to abandon home and children.

On that account such laws would only create worse conditions for women's labour; it would guarantee them exploitation instead of protection; it would bring forth decrease of marriages, increase of concubinage, and would ruin family life instead of strengthening it.

Though, on the one hand, such attempts and claims to limit their liberty of action are eagerly opposed by German women,

they are, in spite of all their righteous struggles for independence, on the other hand convinced that by complete lack of law the self-dependence of women would not be secured, but the employers' liberty for taking the advantage of it for exploitation.

A strong movement to suppress special labour legislation for women would on that account hardly gain ground in Germany. Such feminine efforts would strongly be opposed by the organised women-workers as well as by all those representatives of the women's movement, who have a keen knowledge of the conditions in which the women of the working classes work and live, because such claimants fully mistake the interest of the working women. We earnestly hope that also the protective legislation for adult men, which is recognised and carried out by our labour legislation (R. Q. O.) from the first of June 1891, will be further developed; but we think that there is a great distinction between the wants of workmen and workwomen, the distinction that only by means of State protection the working women can be enabled to protect themselves, to organise themselves in like manner as the labouring men of the period of capitalistic evolution from the very beginning and when taking up the struggle for their standard of life.

On that account we believe in the necessity of special labour legislation for women, but we are convinced (and the experience of the last few years proved this belief) that the factory laws for women, especially the limitation of their factory day, cannot fail to bring with them, after a short time, a shortening of the hours of the adult men with whom they work as well.

Women will not be worked out of the labour market on account of such restrictions, because employers cannot spare them any more. Their peculiar skill in certain trades and occupations will compel the employers in many trades to manage their business according to the terms (conditions) which the law appoints for the employment of women. Moreover, such legislation will produce for the labouring classes what we must struggle to attain for all classes of humanity—a division of work according to sex on account of special qualities; it will put in place of a mechanical or organic division of work a division according to characters and constitutions! Also the sphere of industrial work has space for the peculiarities of both sexes, and we hope that special labour legislation for women is one of the means for securing influence for these peculiarities in daily life.

May happier and better periods improve the conditions of all women to such a degree that they have to endure no social distress.

education, women must be more capable of skilled work, and in pursuits where regulations are equal between the sexes, we do find rapid growth in the number employed. In 1871, women in commercial lines were about equal in number to those in printing; in 1891 there were four times as many women clerks as printers. In 1871 the number of women printers and nurses were not far apart; in 1891 there were ten times as many nurses as printers. What reason is there to doubt that women would have made rapid strides in every skilled pursuit had they been under the same law as men? The usual answer to this question involves what might be called the invalid theory of woman's emancipation. This theory demands that, on account of their innate weakness, we should regard some trades as women's, others as men's; but in the division the advocates of invalidism pass over to women scrubbing, charring, night sick-nursing, which do indeed demand exceptional strength. But surely, as "the mortality of males everywhere exceeds the mortality of females, at nearly all age periods," as women outnumber men, although there are more boys born, and as women live to a riper old age than men, there is no ground on which to base an invalid theory. Think what the mother has done in the animal kingdom—supporting herself and often her offspring as well; think what she has done in savagism—bearing all the drudgery of life; think of the surplus energy a woman must have in civilisation, being able to dress in the unhygienic manner she does and yet live. Not tough? Why, half her indiscretions would kill off a whole generation of men.

But protective law oftener lowers women's wages than it excludes them from a trade. Not long since I met a woman in a London office who had worked fifty years ago for M'Corqudale. She described how she became a skilled hand, and was paid at the same rate, and earned as high wages, as men; but later, when her employer had to protect her, but not the men, from night work, etc., she could no longer command "men's pay." This lowering of wages is tacitly admitted by advocates of partial law; for they invariably reply to the suggestion that protection may close trades to women, that there is no danger, because "they will always work for less."

The desire to protect women has, I am sure, diverted public attention from a matter vital to the economic side, and the side of race continuance, viz., the adequate protection of young persons and the prevention of child employment. The statistics in Miss Brooke's recent book on legislation in Continental



nations show that countries which concern themselves most with women do the least for children. In England, from 1844, when the law first touched the hours of women, up to 1891, the age at which children might be employed in factories was never raised. Consequently the employer had two employees to choose from, both under the same law as to hours, etc., but the adult asking a higher wage, the young person a lower. Who was chosen? Except in tailoring, in all the factory and workshop trades, as well as occupations giving casual employments, women above the age of 25 have decreased. In textile industries the number of females employed decreased between 1881 and 1891 at all age periods, except between 10 and 15 years. The slight increase which women and girls made in tailoring as compared with men was due mainly to an increased employment of the young. While the woman in tailoring has only increased by .15, the young person has increased by .20, and the half-timer by .50. It need not be pointed out how such conditions tend to lower the economic position of the adult and national efficiency.

It was always said that protection for women would lead to legal protection for men; but there is no practical talk even yet of limiting their working hours, except in trades where they are free from the competition of women.

Taking industrial life as it is, this policy has worked harm in many ways. First, it has diverted public attention from the need of abandoning unhealthy processes. The expression often occurs in the Reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories, that such or such a process is unhealthy, but in it "only male adults" are employed. The factory laws of France show to what length the desire to check the employment of women can carry us in indifference to the interests of men. Women are excluded entirely from some sixty trades, and the French capitalist is allowed to continue the most dangerous methods as he employs "only male adults." One set of people argue that as women suffer most in the white lead industry they should be excluded. I have heard extremists reply that men suffer most in linen manufacture, and should, therefore, be excluded; but both parties forget that a process which injures any class of workers a great deal must be lamentably injurious to every class. Our aim should be wider than to protect merely the most susceptible. An unhealthy process remains unhealthy for whoever works at it, and should be forbidden.

Secondly, by protecting women and not men, inspection is made almost impossible, and we are unable to educate the public

in reasonable demands. There is no one who bows more quickly to the inevitable than the consumer. If shops close early, he finds that late shopping can, after all, be abandoned. We still think we must have our bit of job printing done at once, and fail to learn a lesson of forethought, because although the law forbids us to work the woman printer overtime we can work the man.

But the principal reason for making legislation equal is that men need legal protection as much as women. In wage-earning pursuits there are over 5,000,000 men who are outside trade organisations. In industrial lines there are four men unorganised to every woman. There is no class more defenceless than these men workers.

I believe in protective legislation, and I am absolutely honest in wishing it for men. And I would urge their protection in the broadest interest not only of the men but of the community. I believe we have carried one-sided protection much too far in all civilised nations. Women have been shielded from the consequences of military warfare, and now for the last half century from the dangers of industrial warfare, until in every great nation the women far outnumber the men. Surely no greater injury could be done to women, nor to a nation, than to destroy the balance between the sexes. . . . Can any woman doubt that that nation is leading a saner life, a better life, where the balance between the sexes has not been destroyed by protecting one half the race, and leaving the other half exposed to every danger?

#### DISCUSSION.

Mrs J. R. MacDonald, in opening the discussion, said that she was a believer in equal rights for men and women, and she was also a believer in protective labour legislation for women. Those who opposed it seemed not to recognise the difference between good laws for women and bad laws for women. Splendid work had been done in the name of equality in removing bad sex legislation, where women suffered from such disabilities as being deprived of the control of their property, the guardianship of their children, or their responsibilities and duties as citizens. But in the case of protective labour legislation we find the women in possession of a good thing which the men have not. Mrs Blatch seemed to think it humorous to talk about men dying for want of such protection while the women's lives are preserved by it. She (the speaker) did not think this was a thing to laugh at, nor to induce women to take away those laws from women

and let them die. Rather, in the name of equality, let them extend such laws to men, and work for measures such as the Bill for limiting the hours in bakehouses, which was now being promoted by the labour men in Parliament. But those who opposed special labour laws for women gave as their chief reason that the employers, in consequence, employ men instead of women, and that it is better for women to have work under bad conditions than to have none at all. She (the speaker) did not think that if they followed carefully investigations which had been made on this point they would find many facts to bear out this supposition. She would also like to controvert Mrs Blatch's statement that where women's labour is most protected that of children is least protected, for she had studied Miss Brooke's tabulation of the labour laws of European countries, as Mrs Blatch told them to do, and could not see that it bore out this idea. Take, for instance, Mrs Blatch's remarks about Great Britain, which were calculated quite to mislead the Conference. The facts were that the first legislation for children was in 1802, when pauper children were protected. In 1819 a general law to protect children was passed, but it was not till 1842 that women were first protected. Mrs Blatch had also forgotten to mention the Education Acts, which went side by side with the Factory Acts, and without which no record of labour legislation for children in Great Britain was complete. Even granting that in a few cases women lost employment because of special laws, she (the speaker) thought that this was a far lesser evil than the total want of regulation. By regulation the standard of life was raised for the whole of the workers, and this must be the aim of all social reform. Without it the standard of life tended to decline. A friend of hers, a laundress, on one of the hot days recently had had to stand at her ironing from 8 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock at night. This was not contrary to the law as at present applied to laundries, but the consequence was that the girl fainted when she got home, and was unable to return to work for several days. Here it was under protection, not over protection, which, by undermining her health, threw her out of employment.

Mrs Charles M'Laren said she had not heard any argument to-day which tended to show why the laws which affected women should not be extended to men in the same trades. Mrs Sidney Webb said that it was not done owing to the stupidity of men. Well, she (the speaker) thought it was because of their acuteness. Another instance of their cleverness lay in the fact that the men had got Mrs Sidney Webb to come and plead

their cause to-day, and to induce women to advocate restrictions on women's labour which men would not submit to. There was a great difference between male and female work, and it was this—well-paid work went to men, and ill-paid work to women. In all their houses it was the men who cleaned the silver whilst the women scrubbed the floor. She had recently heard a factory inspector say that he had more than made his salary by fines which he had been the means of inflicting upon manufacturers. Did they think it was to the interest of such employers to raise the wages of women or to employ men in their places? Working women would tell them that what they most wanted was a little more in wages. A Royal Commission on the subject had recently reported that "this restrictive legislation on the part of women had already gone far enough, if it had not gone too far." She was surprised that they should discuss the subject of restrictions on women. She imagined they were met to free women from the chains which men and legislation had placed upon them, and she trusted that at a future conference they might discuss the extension of women's work, and the means of their becoming skilled labourers by higher technical education.

Miss Emma Brooke, the author of the work on factory legislation mentioned above, regretted that anything should have been said which would lead people to think that they were fighting men. She wanted to draw their attention to a matter of principle which she thought was often forgotten in arguments on that subject, and that was that the interference with the liberty of the individual for the good of the whole was part of the duty of the legislature, and was the essential condition of social progress. The bad reasons given by men in favour of restrictions for women did not interfere with the sanity of that principle, any more than the bad reasons which women give against it interfere with its value to them in their work for social progress and for the future life of the race.

Countess Gertrude Shack said there was a time when she thought special legislation for women would be a blessing, but it was the working women themselves who had taught her that such was not the case. She had spent five years in the East End, and lived amongst the working classes and saw with her own eyes. They had been taunted that they were not fighting for the good of the working classes, but she contended that they were there to fight for equal laws for men and women. Now, they were asked to come forward and ask for different laws for the working women. She hoped that such would never be the case. At that

time women were half slaves and half angels, but she wanted them to be considered as human beings with a claim for fair treatment. They should not restrict the women, but should organise them and give them help. There were thousands of women who earned their living by selling their bodies. Those women were not vicious, it was hunger which drove them to it, and further restriction would but augment that class. No, for the sake of the morality of the men give equality to working women, and only then could they hope to improve the condition of humanity.

Mrs Stewart Brown said her position was, that whilst she admitted it was often necessary to invoke the aid of the law to insist upon employers giving proper conditions to their employees, yet it was not expedient to incapacitate women in their struggle for a livelihood by placing restrictions upon them which did not equally apply to men in the trades. Mrs Webb had said that in the lead trades the mortality was greater among the women than the men. That was not dealing with the question from a broad point of view, nor was it a reason for forbidding women to be employed in those trades, but rather that the system should be swept away in the interests of men and women alike. She wanted them to consider where such restrictions would lead them to. She thought it was no disgrace for women to enter into any honest and healthy employment. If any employment was not healthy and honest, then it should not exist.

Mrs Amie Hicks, president of the Ropemakers' Union, said she belonged to the "other side," and was in favour of what some called restrictive, but she called protective, legislation for women. As a working woman herself, and one who lived amongst the workers, she protested against the insult offered by those who said that the women in employments where their hours and conditions of work were regulated would go on to the streets. The contrary was much nearer the truth. Let any of those present go into a home for fallen women. What would they find? That those who largely predominated in the room were women for whom there is no legislation—domestic servants. They would find 80 per cent. of those women belonged to the class who went out to service, and for whom there was no legislation. She asked for protective legislation—legislation which would protect the limbs and lives of workers. It had been said that the East-end women opposed restriction. She would point out that instead of opposing it hundreds of them had attended demonstrations to demand it. What was the May Day de-

monstration? What did it tell? That those women, who came from Bromley and Plaistow and walked to Hyde Park, went there for an eight hours' day. Those women were joining with the men in asking for restrictions on their labours.

**Mrs Montefiore** said she was in favour of restrictions upon all, but asked for no restrictions which did not apply equally to the men and women in the same trade.

**Miss Clementina Black** said there had been a desire that a working woman should speak upon the subject. Only one had spoken—Mrs Hicks—and she was very clear in favour of protective legislation. She (the speaker) said that they would find that the worst paid trades of all were those in which the women were not restricted—the trades at which they worked in their own homes and where their hours were not limited. She thought it was the almost invariable rule that, where shortening of hours took place, a rise in the conditions took place all round.

**Mr Herbert Burrows**, secretary of the Matchmakers' Union, said he drew the inference from the remarks of some speakers that they thought it was the trades unionists who wanted restrictions on women's labour in order to drive them out of the market. As a trade unionist himself, and one who had visited and discussed with fellow unionists on the Continent and in America, he could say in the name of trades unionism that was untrue. It was absurd to imagine that restrictions would drive women out of the labour market. If there was anything which would degrade women in the market, it was their unregulated labour. Some speakers had hinted at removing restrictions already imposed upon the labour of women. Was there a speaker present who would stand upon the platform and openly advocate the course? He thought not! They were there to-day to advocate the rights of women, but he would remind them that there was something greater than that—the interest of all humanity. Those who were opposing protective legislation in the interests of women were really helping those employers who are grinding down women's wages, and degrading women's work so that women are driven into all sorts of straits to make a living.

After a few remarks from the chairman the meeting terminated.

## **SPECIAL LABOUR LEGISLATION FOR CHILDREN.**

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- (A) CHILDREN UNDER THE FACTORY LAWS.
- (B) CHILDREN OUTSIDE THE FACTORY LAWS.
- (C) CHILDREN WORKING IN MINES AND DANGEROUS TRADES.

SMALL HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

*WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, MORNING.*

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**MRS CARLOW MARTIN** in the Chair.

**Mrs Carlaw Martin** said it was to be regretted that Britain, compared with other countries, lagged behind in legislation for children. Since Sir John Gorst brought the question forward some years ago, but little had been done until quite recently, Mr Robson's Children's Bill, introduced with the object of freeing children from incessant and arduous toil, being the only serious effort made to maintain interest in the subject. Scotland was very prominent in the movement to ameliorate the condition of children, there now being but two towns in the whole of North Britain in which the half-timers were employed. As a matter of fact, there were no fewer than 47 towns in Scotland in which there was no child labour at all. All round, in fact, there was very considerable diminution. Manufacturers, it appeared, were losing faith in the system, first on economic grounds, and secondly on humanitarian grounds. If Britain were to hold her own, the age limit must be raised to 14, but there was

still the problem of how to deal with or regulate casual labour. Outside the factory children were employed in incessant labour at very little wages.

## Children under the Factory Laws of Switzerland.

**Mme. Ryff** (Bern, Switzerland). Read, in **Mme. Ryff's** absence, by **Mlle. de Mulinen**.

LA Constitution de la Confédération suisse de 1874, dans son art. 34 proclame le droit de statuer sur le travail des enfants dans les fabriques ; cet art. 34 a trouvé son application dans la loi fédérale du 23 Mars 1877, concernant le travail dans les fabriques. Ce n'est donc que depuis cette époque de trois ans que les autorités fédérales, reconnaissant la nécessité de légiférer sur la matière, ont écarté les abus manifestes qui avaient lieu dans l'industrie des fabriques.

Depuis 1878 les enfants au dessous de 14 ans révolus ne peuvent être employés au travail dans les fabriques. Pour les enfants depuis le commencement de la quinzième année jusqu'à seize ans révolus, le temps réservé à l'enseignement scolaire et religieux et celui du travail dans la fabrique ne doivent pas, réunis, excéder onze heures. L'enseignement scolaire et religieux ne doit pas être sacrifié au travail dans la fabrique.

Il est interdit de faire travailler la nuit ou le dimanche des jeunes gens âgés de moins de 18 ans. Dans les industries pour lesquelles le Conseil fédéral a reconnu en vertu de l'art. 13 la nécessité d'un travail non interrompu, ce même conseil peut toutefois autoriser l'admission de garçons de 14 à 18 ans, s'il est démontré qu'il est indispensable d'y employer des jeunes gens et surtout si cela paraît utile dans l'intérêt même d'un bon apprentissage. Dans ces cas là le Conseil fédéral fixera cependant pour ces jeunes gens la durée du travail de nuit au dessous de la durée normale de onze heures. Le Conseil fédéral est autorisé à désigner les branches d'industrie dans lesquelles il est absolument interdit de faire travailler des enfants.

Le fabricant ne peut invoquer comme excuse son ignorance de l'âge de ses ouvriers, ni de l'enseignement qu'ils ont à suivre. Le Conseil fédéral exerce le contrôle sur l'exécution de la pré-



sente loi. Il désigne, dans ce but, des inspecteurs permanents et détermine leurs obligations et leurs attributions. Il peut en outre, s'il le juge nécessaire, ordonner des inspections spéciales sur certaines industries ou fabriques.

Sans préjudice de la responsabilité civile, toute contravention aux prescriptions de la présente loi ou aux ordres écrits de l'autorité compétente, sera frappée, par les tribunaux, d'amendes de 5 à 500 francs. En cas de récidive, il est loisible aux tribunaux de prononcer indépendamment de l'amende, un emprisonnement qui peut s'étendre jusqu'à trois mois.

Ce n'est pas sans grandes difficultés de part et d'autre que cette loi humanitaire et bienfaisante a été élaborée et qu'elle est entrée en vigueur.

Ce qui rendait difficile la détermination uniforme de la limite d'âge pour l'admission dans les fabriques, c'était l'absence de dispositions concordantes sur la durée de l'enseignement scolaire obligatoire dans les différents cantons; quelques uns s'étaient prononcés pour la limite d'âge de 12 ans; plusieurs pour celle de 13 ans, un assez grand nombre adhérait à celle de 14 ans, aucun canton n'avait proposé 15 ans ou au dessus.

Les avis n'étaient pas moins partagés dans les cercles industriels. Zürich demanda que l'on adoptât pour limite 12 ans, l'Union suisse du Commerce et de l'Industrie, 13 ans; le Directoire commercial et l'Union commerciale et industrielle de St Gall demandaient qu'elle fût fixée à 14 ans, d'autres fabricants dans le canton d'Argovie s'exprimèrent dans le même sens.

Enfin les ouvriers eux-mêmes n'étaient pas d'accord sur cette question; le Comité central de la Société du Grütli proposait d'exclure les enfants du travail dans les fabriques aussi longtemps qu'ils devaient suivre les écoles primaires obligatoires; la réunion des délégués des ouvriers du Canton d'Appenzell voulait qu'ils en fussent exclus jusqu'à 13 ans, les ouvriers de Zoug jusqu'à 14 ans, l'Union ouvrière suisse jusqu'à 16 ans.

Le Conseil fédéral, considérant qu'un progrès positif serait réalisé si on assurait à la jeunesse suisse la jouissance d'un enseignement scolaire jusqu'à l'âge de 14 ans, ce qui arrivera nécessairement si la loi fédérale sur le travail dans les fabriques défend absolument d'admettre les enfants avant cet âge, se décida de fixer la limite d'âge à 14 ans révolus.

Le contrôle sur l'exécution de cette loi appartient au Conseil fédéral qui désigne, dans ce but, des inspecteurs permanents et détermine leurs obligations et leurs attributions.

## LES INSPECTEURS DE FABRIQUE.

*Rapports.*

L'inspectorat des fabriques est divisé en trois arrondissements ayant chacun un inspecteur spécial ; ces inspecteurs sont chargés de visiter les fabriques, d'accueillir les plaintes qui leur sont adressées, de conduire les actions intentées pour contravention à la loi et de faire tous les deux ans un rapport détaillé sur les faits les plus importants de leur activité.

Nous relevons du dernier rapport paru et portant sur les années 1896 et 1897 ce qui concerne l'application de l'art. 16 de la loi sur le travail des enfants dans les fabriques.

*I<sup>r</sup>. Arrondissement.*

Suisse centrale et orientale : environ 2000 établissements avec un personnel de 85,657 ouvriers.

L'Inspecteur mentionne de nombreuses plaintes des instituteurs concernant l'excès de travail infligé aux enfants dans l'industrie, particulièrement dans celle de la broderie ; beaucoup d'instituteurs regrettent de voir que leur enseignement est annulé par le travail excessif des enfants, même à la maison, ils deviennent abattus, nerveux et leur vue s'affaiblit ; et ce n'est pas seulement des enfants de parents pauvres qu'il s'agit, mais aussi d'enfants appartenant à des familles aisées.

Un rapport spécial, publié par le pasteur Frey de Peterzell et une enquête officielle du Canton de St Gall ont démontré jusqu'à l'évidence les effets pernicieux de cet état de choses.

L'Inspecteur conclut en exprimant le désir que les autorités locales puissent mieux comprendre combien il serait de leur intérêt de faire observer plus strictement les dispositions de la loi en faveur de la protection des enfants ; et il ajoute qu'il est étrange de voir que les sociétés d'ouvriers, ayant connaissance des abus qui se commettent dans le travail infligé aux enfants, ne les dénoncent presque jamais, tandis qu'ils le font si souvent lorsqu'il s'agit de l'excès de travail infligé à l'un de leurs membres adultes.

*II<sup>r</sup>. Arrondissement.*

Suisse romande et Tessin, 1412 fabriques avec un personnel de 16,054 ouvriers.

La circulaire du 7 Avril 1885 du Conseil fédéral aux

gouvernements cantonaux est encore loin d'être observée; ses dispositions ont dû être rappelées à 62 établissements qui n'avaient pas les attestations d'âge qu'elle prescrit pour les ouvriers de 14 à 18 ans.

La première de toutes les conditions pour arriver à l'exécution d'une loi, c'est tout d'abord de la bien faire connaître. Or, si dès le début, tous les gouvernements cantonaux s'étaient donné la peine de faire adresser à tous les intéressés des exemplaires spéciaux des lois, pour être affichés dans l'intérieur des locaux de travail, il y a longtemps que bien des difficultés, provenant de l'ignorance de ces lois, auraient disparu de la scène.

Concernant les attestations d'âge pour les jeunes ouvriers la tâche de l'Inspecteur serait singulièrement facilitée, s'il rencontrait toujours ces pièces dans les établissements qu'il est appelé à inspecter.

A noter : la Compagnie du Gothard a créé pour les enfants des ouvriers des ateliers de Bellinzzone, une école primaire et une école secondaire pour les enfants de langue allemande.

La Fabrique de chocolat Suchard possède un fonds en faveur des enfants des ouvriers, en vue de faciliter leur apprentissage.

### *III. Arrondissement—Suisse occidentale.*

L'Inspecteur voit souvent des enfants au dessous de l'âge légal occupés dans les fabriques, particulièrement dans l'industrie de la broderie, mais aussi dans des fabriques de cigares, dans des tuileries et aussi dans des imprimeries. Naturellement il exige chaque fois rigoureusement les attestations d'âge pour les jeunes ouvriers et il est étonnant de voir combien de fois ces pièces font défaut. Dans un cas d'accident de travail l'Inspecteur a pu constater que l'âge indiqué dans les passeports italiens n'est pas toujours conforme à la réalité.

Dans les districts argoviens de l'industrie des cigares et dans celle de la paille, le personnel enseignant se plaint régulièrement du travail des enfants à domicile; le canton d'Argovie ayant à l'étude une loi de protection pour les ouvrières, il est à espérer que l'inconvénient mentionné pourra disparaître.

Il reste encore à mentionner une catégorie de travail des enfants pour laquelle le canton dont il s'agit n'est pas d'accord avec les vues des Inspecteurs réunis; au printemps une fabrique de vannerie emploie des jeunes gens au dessous de l'âge de 14 ans pour peler des osiers; aussi peu que d'autres industries la vannerie doit avoir le droit de faire travailler des enfants qui

n'ont pas atteint l'âge légal ; ce cas sera soumis à la décision du Département fédéral de l'Agriculture et du Commerce.

#### INSTITUTIONS D'UTILITÉ PUBLIQUE POUR JEUNES OUVRIÈRES.

La Fabrique Zuberbühler à Zurzach pour la lingerie, a fondé une école de travaux manuels avec internat gratuit sous la direction d'une commission composée de 5 membres ; cette fondation a pour but de former des lingères, tout en leur apprenant la tenue du ménage ; elles sont admises dès l'âge de 15 ans, le cours est de 1½ à 2 ans, après lequel elles peuvent entrer comme ouvrières dans la fabrique du patron ou travailler à leur propre compte.

Une institution pareille est en voie de formation (1897) dans la filature Emmenhof près Derendingen (Soleure) ; le prospectus indique un séjour obligatoire de 4 ans, l'entrée étant prévue dès l'âge de 14 ans ; les jeunes filles reçoivent dès le commencement une gratification proportionnée, dont le montant va toutes les années en augmentant ; en dehors du travail dans la filature les internées reçoivent l'enseignement des travaux du ménage. L'Inspecteur formule quelques réserves sur la nécessité d'un engagement de 4 ans, en vue d'un apprentissage relativement facile.

D'une manière générale les inspecteurs reconnaissent que leurs relations avec les gouvernements cantonaux sont excellentes et que plusieurs font réellement de nobles efforts pour arriver à une bonne application de la loi et en facilitant à l'inspectorat fédéral des fabriques l'accomplissement de sa lourde tâche.

#### SECRÉTARIAT SUISSE DES OUVRIERS. (XI<sup>e</sup> RAPPORT, ANNÉE 1897.)

L'Inspecteur de fabrique du I<sup>er</sup> arrondissement ayant trouvé étrange que les sociétés d'ouvriers ont connaissance des abus qui se commettent dans le travail infligé aux enfants, sans presque jamais les dénoncer, nous avons pris à tâche d'étudier les rapports du Secrétariat des ouvriers suisses pour savoir à quoi nous en tenir là-dessus, et voici ce que entre autre nous y avons trouvé.

Les Sociétés ouvrières en Suisse s'occupent particulièrement des conditions de travail entre patrons et ouvriers dans l'intérêt de ces derniers ; les conditions d'apprentissage sont également pris en considération, mais il y est peu question, dans les rapports

annuels, du travail des enfants généralement parlant ; cependant un fait particulier mérite d'être relaté.

L'adjoint romand du Secrétariat ouvrier s'était rendu dans le Tessin en vue d'étudier l'application de la loi fédérale sur le travail dans les fabriques dans ce canton ; à cette occasion on lui parla de faits incroyables qui s'y passaient et dont il résolut de se procurer une connaissance certaine ; il s'agissait de petites filles, à peine âgées de 12 ans, internées dans les grandes filatures de soie à Lugano, Capolago et Mendrisio, d'où elles n'osaient pas sortir pendant la semaine.

L'adjoint romand se posta un dimanche matin au débarcadère où les petites et les grandes ouvrières se rendent pour recevoir les vivres de la semaine envoyés par leur famille, et il les questionna. Plusieurs des petites filles déclarèrent qu'elles avaient 12 ans ; elles travaillent en été de 5½ h. à midi et de 1 h. à 7½ ; en hiver le travail commence le matin à 6 h. et se termine le soir à 8 h. La journée de travail est payée à raison de 50 centimes ; les paiements se font en monnaie italienne. L'opinion publique est que l'Inspecteur fédéral n'a jamais pu voir ces enfants et qu'il n'a aucune connaissance de ces faits.

Pour s'en convaincre l'adjoint romand se rendit chez l'Inspecteur du II<sup>e</sup> arrondissement et lui fit part de ce qu'il avait vu ; l'Inspecteur répondit qu'il s'était également occupé de la triste condition de ces enfants, mais que le Conseil fédéral avait accordé aux établissements qui les occupent une situation exceptionnelle et, eu égard aux circonstances particulières dans lesquelles ils se trouvent, la loi fédérale sur le travail dans les fabriques n'a pas été appliquée envers eux.

Persuadé qu'en pareil cas la voix de l'opinion publique a seule le pouvoir de se faire écouter, l'adjoint romand provoqua une discussion de ces faits dans la presse ouvrière ; et cette discussion se transporta dans la presse politique ; la conséquence en fut que bientôt après le Conseil fédéral retira la concession qu'il avait accordée aux filatures du Tessin, et ces établissements rentrèrent dans le droit commun. La presse ouvrière n'avait pas espéré un si prompt résultat, ni un résultat aussi heureux.

L'adjoint romand du Secrétariat ouvrier suisse a continué de vouer son attention à tout ce qui touche les intérêts des ouvriers du Tessin ; il s'est mis en rapport avec l'Inspecteur dont cet arrondissement relève, en vue de l'appuyer dans la surveillance de l'application de la loi sur le travail dans les fabriques. L'utilité de son action et de celle du Secrétariat ouvrier en général se manifesta particulièrement dans le sein du Grand

Conseil du Canton du Tessin, où M. Malet avança la proposition de créer un secrétariat ouvrier aux frais du Canton.

On peut dire que dans le Tessin comme partout ailleurs en Suisse, la mouvement ouvrier gagne du terrain et ne manquera pas de se rendre utile.

Résumant l'art. 34 de la Constitution fédérale, la loi de 1877, les considérations du message du Conseil fédéral et les différentes ordonnances qui ont suivi, et comparant ces actes avec les rapports des Inspecteurs fédéraux et celui du Secrétariat ouvrier, on constate les excellentes intentions dont la législation s'est inspirée, mais on doit regretter que ces intentions n'aient pu se réaliser qu'en partie; le domaine technique absorbe la plus grande part de l'activité des inspecteurs et par suite des progrès incessants des arts mécaniques et ceux de la chimie industrielle, il deviendra de plus en plus difficile, sinon impossible aux Inspecteurs de vouer l'attention nécessaire à la protection des personnes, laquelle est pourtant particulièrement visée par la loi fédérale concernant le travail dans les fabriques.

## Special Legislation for Children under the Factory Laws.

**Miss Martina G. Kramers, Delegate from the National Council of Holland.**

THE influence on industrial reform of the introduction of the steam-engine into manufacture cannot easily be over-rated, but, at the same time, in social respects it has accelerated the triumphal march of the capitalist production system, which continually widens the abyss between the privileged and the destitute classes. But its efforts to pull humanity asunder have called another force into action—the unified fellow-feeling between men and men and the solidarity that keeps us all together. Nowadays we often see educated persons, even from the highest rank of society, devote their life and energies to the uplifting of the lowly, because they cannot bear to see men and women born with the same faculties as themselves for enjoying the sunshine in the green woods and on the blue sea, or for widening their sphere of thought by knowledge of nature, and the life of far-off times and nations, and with great faculties for discovering

new truths or promoting the weal of humanity, doomed to wear away their lives between four walls in utter misery, toiling to produce for others all imaginable sorts of goods. The sympathy for the working classes is really spreading, and although it does not always take the right way for utterance, it is fast growing; the 'Song of the Shirt' and Ada Negri's poems find an echo in many hearts. The result on the one hand is a great deal of philanthropy, which, although it is but a drop to the ocean of want, does not always deserve the despising glance which the socialist casts at it, and on the other hand it produced protective legislation.

Of course, when the law directs its energy to protecting the oppressed, it begins with the feeblest among these, and the first protective legislation was devised in the interest of children. The use of steam-engines for weaving and spinning had made the work so easy that young children could be employed at it, and poor parents did not hesitate to send them to the factory from their seventh year. Not having enjoyed much instruction themselves, they failed to see the importance for their children of going to school, and in cases where a numerous family had to be supported, they sent boys and girls of six years old to work in order to gain their wages in all trades where their feeble hands could be of any use. The guilds that were abolished in France in 1791 no longer exercised their patronage, and the employer did not concern himself about teaching the trade to the young apprentices. As of old, the work that aroused the strongest disapproval being done by little boys, whose age would give them the right to play and romp to their hearts' content, was the underground work. So the mining trade was the first one where the age of admission was fixed by law—in England in 1802, in France in 1813, in Prussia in 1861. This first step was followed by many others, although much resistance was made by those who maintained that the father was the sole master of his children, and that his right to avail himself of their labour, being a divine right, was not to be meddled with by legislation. Meanwhile, with the word pauperism the nations became more and more familiar from 1830 to 1849, and first in England and France inquiries were being instituted as to the condition of working people, which revealed so much misery, especially with regard to child labour, that different schemes were formed and adopted to assuage this evil. It was clear that children could not be kept from gaining wages for their

parents, if not in the factory or workshop, at least in their own homes, unless they were compelled to attend school regularly, and this gave rise to the half-time system in England, and to various laws on compulsory education in other countries. The first law against the employment of children at a too early age in France was due to M. de Villermé's study of the condition of labourers. It was issued in 1841, and fixed the limit of entrance into the factory at 8 years, whilst it only applied to workshops with more than 20 hands and continuous fire. However insufficient, this was a beginning, and 10 years afterwards the contracts of apprenticeship were legally regulated, and more workshops and institutions put under control. Then in 1874 a new law stipulated that no children under 12 should enter the workshop unless they were provided with a school certificate, or, when aged between 10 years and 12 years, were going to some school at least 10 hours per week, whilst they were permitted to work for their employer 6 hours a day. Like the half-time system in England, this measure was well calculated to prepare the institution of compulsory school education which has been adopted in France in 1882. At first the combination of the Apprentice Law of 1851, the Half-time Law of 1874, and the Compulsory School Law of 1882 caused some confusion: *e.g.*, a boy of 11 years old in possession of a school certificate was taken away from his master, a watchmaker, by the labour inspector, and this obliged him to seek employment at a printing office, this trade being less regulated; so he only earned 2·50fr. instead of 5fr., and was nearly starving when M. Duval, in whose book I found these particulars, became acquainted with his case. Another boy of 14 had never been able to obtain a school certificate on account of his narrow intellectual faculties and was now doing some light work for a joiner. The inspector came and ordered him to become a half-timer, so he was dismissed and lost his wages, and his little brother died of hunger. These and similar instances showed the necessity of a better legislation on child labour; nor was this desire limited to France. An international conference was called together in Berlin, and between the years 1876 and 1893 nearly all civilised countries got their protective laws on factory labour. There are no great differences as to the age of admission; only some advocated the English half-time system, with admission to the workshop at 10 years, 6 hours a day, and attendance at a school during 10 hours per week, although I do not suppose that teachers ever recommended



this course. The age of going down in mines is generally fixed a little higher than that of entrance into the factory. In Germany and France children are permitted to work when they have their school certificate, or when they are 13 years old. In Switzerland, New York, and some German States they must have attained the age of 14; in Austria, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Roumania and Pennsylvania that of 12; in England, Denmark, Hungary and Spain that of 10, and in Italy 9. In Canada and Louisiana boys must be 12 and girls 14 years old.

For working in the mines the age required is 10 in Italy, 14 for boys and 18 for girls in Norway, 14 for both in Portugal. So for the age at which protection ceases, the conclusion of the Berlin Conference was that it should be 18 years for the men and 21 years for the women, and this has become law in New York, but other countries do not always agree, and six have put the limit of protection at 16 years for men, others at 17 or 15, whilst women remain under protection all their life in five countries, of which Holland is one. Some States have two periods of protection, and limit the working hours for children from 12 to 14 to 10 hours, and from 14 to 16 or 18 to 11 hours a day. Only Switzerland, Austria, Denmark and Norway have protection for adult men. Night work, *i.e.*, labour from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., is generally prohibited for persons under protection. The same may be said of Sunday work in general, but here exceptions are indispensable on account of milk, fruit, etc., being spoilt by standing; moreover, the Berlin Conference's desire to have a weekly holiday for every labourer meets with difficulties in the execution, because the Jews want that day to be Saturday, and that renders control difficult. A most important part of factory legislation, but certainly the most arduous to carry out, is to make it reach all places where paid work is being done, for it is impossible to make domestic work and labour of children with their parents the object of inspection without infringing on individual liberty. In France home industries without steam-engines or mechanic motors are exempt from inspection; in Belgium likewise. In England family workshops are not treated on equal terms with the others, and in Switzerland all closed localities occupying more than 5 workers are subject to inspection. Everywhere agriculture and work in shops or offices is left out of the protection laws; only in England since 1873 children under 8 years old are forbidden to work in the fields, and since 1892 the hours in shops are limited for children under 18.

In all probability many reforms will have to be made in factory legislation in progress of time, and the most urgent of these seems to be that the actual application and execution of the paper law will have to be enforced, for in all countries people complain of the inefficiency of the factory law inspectors; neither their number, nor their salaries, nor, as it is whispered, their quality, was satisfactory to warrant the realisation of the wise legal measures taken by benevolent governments for the welfare of their subjects. And really this is not to be wondered at, when we consider the difficulty of the inspector's task, and the obstacles which exceptions and exceptions from exceptions throw in their way, whilst the general tendency among the employers is to make these exceptions the rule. In France, *e.g.*, the law of November 2, 1892, admits four kinds of protected labourers; those who may work 10 hours a day, those who may work 60 hours per week, those who work 66 hours a week, and those who work 12 hours a day according to the law of 1848, each category with its particular hours of rest daily, and every man with either Saturday or Sunday for weekly holiday. Now, if on a Saturday night the inspector finds 20 people employed in a workshop, he needs more than King Solomon's wisdom to find out which of these are possibly transgressing the law. Besides, the inspector is often regarded, or at least treated, as a common enemy by employers and employed, and this is not calculated to support his energy and alleviate his task. Much would be gained by mutual trust and understanding between trades unions and inspectors.

Let me conclude by giving you a rapid survey of what my country, Holland, has done for the protection of children by Factory Laws. In 1863 a State Commission established the fact that factory labour at an early age was pernicious, but it hesitated to propose legal protection, for, although excluded from one kind of labour, the children would yet have to earn their living, and the legislation could not take the responsibility for their starving. So the Committee only recommended compulsory education, this not being direct interference with the contract between employer and worker. However, in 1874, we got our first Factory Law, which was followed by a fresh one in 1889, whereas compulsory education is only to be introduced this year or next year. A State Commission instituted to inquire into the condition of working people revealed sad facts, and showed that only in two or three towns the owners of factories concern themselves with the education of the children that come to work

at their mills, and have instituted an examination for admission and a school with evening classes for the young people in their employment. At present new laws are in process of formation, on limitation of working hours for adults, on the labour contract, on loss of parental authority where it is a prejudice to the children, and compulsory education is to complete the existing Factory Law.

This, however, is not yet entirely carried out, as long as there are not a greater number of inspectors and these do not co-operate with the trade unions as comprising the persons in whose interest the law was made.

## Children outside the Factory Laws.

Mrs F. G. Hogg (Great Britain).

It has been well said that there are many laws conceivable which would gradually better and strengthen the national temper, but that, for the most part, they are such as the national temper must be much bettered before it will bear. Every generation makes its own social conscience, and throws a new light—or shadow—on the nature of its social obligations; and higher standards of national morality can only be reached by the resolute refusal of this conscience of the age to accept as final the faulty condition of things it finds existing.

And in no direction is this bettering of the national temper more urgently needed than on this important question of child labour. The history of our factory legislation is the history of a persistent effort to better, in spite of violent opposition from employees, and from the parents of the children themselves, the lot of children working under the Factory Laws. The system, in which till now we occupied our usual position of isolation as the employees of the half-time labour of children of the age of 11 has recently received a severe check through the successful progress of Mr Robson's Bill for raising the age to 12, and is, we are told, dying a natural death. But the large class of children who, in our large centres of industry, and in the remote agricultural districts, are, while nominally working full school time, employed as wage-earners out of school hours, and are using up their meagre stock of physical capital in casual and harmful occupations for the sake of the scanty earnings their labour can

bring in, have hitherto been left out of consideration, and allowed to work under any conditions, at any trade, and for any number of hours, under no legal protection whatever! The recently published Parliamentary return on this question—the direct result of a deputation organised by the Women's Industrial Council to Sir John Gorst—throws a much-needed searchlight of publicity over this ugly blot on our national scutcheon, and presents a strong case for legislative interference in the interests of the nation of the future, no less than in those of these child-slaves of to-day.

This return, described by the Vice-President of the Council as a “painful and sickening document,” and, as propounded, a most difficult problem for Government and Parliament to ponder over, contains the names of 147,000 children of school age who are regularly employed either before school, at mid-day, or after school, and in many cases at all these times as well as for the whole of the Saturday “holiday.” In addition to these, there are thousands either working irregularly, or for their own parents for no wages, whose names are not recorded. Of the 147,000 who are included in the return, 131 are under 7, 1120 under 8, 4211 under 9, 11,027 under 10, and 22,131 under 11 years of age; 9778 are employed from 30 to 40 hours a week, 2390 are employed from 40 to 50 hours a week, 793 are employed over 60 hours a week, and 75 are employed over 70 hours a week.

Among the hard cases quoted is one of a boy of 6, who delivers milk—probably before school hours—for 28 hours a week; of another who is engaged in pea-picking for 20 hours a week; while another of the same age works at brick-making for a weekly wage of 3s. 6d., which, to judge by the customary rate of payment for infant labour, argues excessive hours of exhausting toil. We find a boy of 10 working on a farm for 72 hours, and one of 12 for 87 hours a week. Another, also aged 12, but in Standard III., is employed in a marine store shop for 74 hours, and another in a chemist's shop for 78 hours a week. But the maximum of overwork is reached in the case of a newspaper boy, who adds 100 hours at this employment to the work of the school. One boy is up every morning between 3 and 4 o'clock to call the workmen, by each of whom he is paid 3d. a week for his services. When this preliminary to the day is over, he starts at 5:30 to deliver papers till 9 o'clock, when his education is supposed to begin. In my own inquiries I came across the case of a little girl of 7, who was also out every morning at 4:30 to call the workmen in the adjoining streets. Think what it means for

these children to be out two full hours before sunrise, insufficiently clad, and breakfastless, in the cold and wet of a winter morning, while grown men and women are sleeping heavily.

With regard to the occupations followed by boys, 15,182 are returned as paper boys, 8627 as "knocking-up" in the morning, taking out dinners, etc., many of the latter walking 3, 4, 5, and, in some cases, 6 miles between school to carry dinners to different works; 76,173 are shop boys, 6115 farm boys, 2435 street sellers, and 10,636 are employed in odd jobs. Now street selling, which includes the hawking round of flowers, fruit, matches, and the strange miscellaneous assortment of goods known in the trade as *ld. wonders*, the best market for which is round the doors of public-houses, is a practice universally condemned by all thoughtful persons; and from every quarter come expressions of opinion as to the deterioration, moral and physical, resulting from it. Schoolmasters are also practically unanimous in the disapproval of the sale of papers by young boys. Not only do the long distances walked, and the late hours seriously affect their punctuality and capacity for school work, but they are often seduced into habits of betting and gambling, which ruin them for the steady work of after life. As it is an acknowledged fact that barbers' shops are also, more often than not, betting agencies, it is evident that the large number of boys returned as *lather boys*, who are often kept at work till midnight on Saturday, as well as those employed in and about public-houses, have not a much better chance of escaping the corruption of evil communications.

When we come to the girls, the work though, as a rule, more casual and indefinite, presents a no less appalling record of overstrain. Employment spoken of as "uncertain" as regards hours may generally be taken to mean long hours at irregular times. This is invariably true in those districts where child labour is in request for home industries; and it is here that its harmful effects are most apparent and most detrimental to education. I could bring forward case after case of little match-box makers of 8 and 9 working 6 hours daily, 4 or 5 of them *after* school; of others working habitually till 11, or even later; of artificial flower-makers of 5 and 7, beginning work at 5 a.m., and toiling through the long day in a small, unventilated attic, an atmosphere polluted with gas for the irons, with the smell of the dyes and gutta percha, and with poisonous dust. It is probable that the majority of the girls in the Government return said to be employed in needlework and similar occupations are the victims of one or other of the many forms of slavery summed up in the

words home industries. We find babies of 6, 7 and 8 hired out by their parents to "mind" neighbours' babies often almost as big as themselves; to scrub doorsteps and floors; to turn a mangle, and to "fetch errands," which in districts where the sweated trades congregate often means carrying bundles of work far in excess of their strength to and fro from the shop for the over-driven home workers, and this for hours which compare unfavourably even with those of their brothers. In the before-mentioned return there is a case of a girl *under* 6 who delivers milk for 35 hours a week; of another who drags about a baby for 29 hours a week, while a girl of 13 is employed in a shop for 72 hours a week at the munificent remuneration of 2s. or 1d. for every three hours.

On account of their frailer physique and more rapid development, girls suffer more from overstrain than boys; and teacher after teacher tells how they are too heavily taxed for their strength, how they have no real childhood, and come to school tired out, and totally unable to learn from the excessive labour to which they are subjected. They are, too, more often kept from school altogether than are the boys, their education being looked upon as of no importance if there is a job going by which they can earn a few pence,

The usual time-worn arguments made use of to bolster up a deification of indifference in this matter—the destitute widow with six starving children, and the advantage of early training in the practical business of life—vanish into thin air when the facts are closely examined. Even if the scanty pence earned by the children were of sufficient value to be taken into serious consideration, it is by no means the poorest parents who are the worst offenders; while, as to beginning to learn the practical business of life as soon as they have reached the years of discretion, which for them, apparently, is at the somewhat premature age of 6, how many of them can be said to be doing this? It cannot be held that the girls who turn a mangle, scrub endless doorsteps or fetch errands up to all hours of the night; the boys who chop sugar or chaff, who carry coal, or hawk goods through the streets, are engaged in work that is in any sense a training for the battle of life. On the contrary, the possibility of earning without being at the trouble of acquiring skill or knowledge is eminently calculated to foster in them a dislike to any regular employment which demands concentrated effort. After a few years of this casual earning, there is but little hope of the child becoming an efficient workman or a useful citizen.

The practice of withdrawing children from school life altogether just when its advantages are beginning to tell, and before they are mentally or physically fit for immediate entrance into a regular trade, is one universally deplored by all who have the true interests of the people at heart. But this dovetailing of work and education is even more disastrous in the inevitable sacrifice it involves of youth, health, and every reasonable chance of future success.

And what is the remedy?

It is hopeless to look for any immediate enlightenment from the parents, though their sin is, perhaps, more due to blindness born of long use and wont in themselves and those whose standard they follow, than to conscious selfishness and cruelty. Just as in the matter of school attendance, they require the education of the law to open their eyes to a sense of parental responsibility. In the case of home work, the Bill for its regulation promoted by the Women's Industrial Council this session, although not directly touching the hours of work, would, by bringing the domestic workshop more directly under the factory inspector, lead to the enforcement of the existing law for the protection of children—a law which is now a dead letter, because there are no known means of carrying it into effect. It is also suggested that the posting up of the provisions of the law with regard to the employment of children in domestic workshops would not only have an excellent moral effect upon those responsible for them, but would lead to a more certain administration of these provisions.

With regard to the casual employment of children in the streets, its worst features might be abolished by an Act empowering local authorities to prohibit children of school age from offering goods for sale, delivering goods, soliciting orders, or calling workmen, or being in any other manner employed in the streets between certain specified hours. I believe that some such form of restrictive legislation is contemplated in Germany, where a similar inquiry to that lately made here has been carried on, and it will be extremely helpful if any German visitors present can give us information on this point.

That these are questions of grave national importance none of us will be prepared to deny. The lives of these children, as intellectual and spiritual beings, are committed to our care; and on our sense of what is due to them depends the answer to the question whether every man and woman is equipped to live the best life and to do the best work for which he or she is naturally

fitted. Not "best" in that condition of life into which they have had the good or ill fortune to be born, but "best" when all their natural powers and capacities have been called forth and developed by the wisest and most liberal upbringing that the knowledge and justice of the age can provide.

Now the proposals for legal restriction which I have to lay before you are threefold:—

Firstly, with regard to the children employed in home industries, it is suggested that Section 98 of the Factory and Workshops Act of 1878, which exempts from the operation of the law those domestic workshops where work is done at irregular intervals and not as the sole or chief source of income, should be deleted; that the provisions of Section 16 of the same Act, which regulate the hours of employment for children, should be posted in all domestic workshops, and that this clause be amended by the prohibition for children attending school of all work between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Secondly, with regard to the casual employment of children in the streets, we believe that its worst features would be abolished by an Act empowering local authorities to prohibit children of school age from offering goods for sale.

Thirdly, as an additional safeguard for these two classes of children, and for the protection of those otherwise employed, it is suggested that in cases where the education of a child is obviously impaired by his or her employment, the School Board shall, after due notification to parent or other employer, if such employment be not discontinued, have power to prosecute before a magistrate.

## Child Labour outside the Factory Laws.

Frau Simson, Delegate from National Council of Germany.  
Read by Miss Page (Norwich).

I AM most sensible of the fact that anyone approaching this heartrending subject, one of the saddest and most serious social problems of our time, should suppress any sentimental feeling, lest the warm heart should overrule the cool clear head in weighing the two sides which this problem presents to the observer. On the one side, we see enforced on thousands and thousands the most stringent necessity of use and abuse of such child labour.



On the other side we are impressed most painfully by the consequences, for the children, in regard to their sanitary, moral and educational development. As to the parents, the economic law of the regulation of wages is the principal point, and, second, the moral and sanitary influence.

For indeed it is a vicious circle of cause and effect with which we have to deal here. Child labour is both the cause as well as the effect of continually lowering wages, while the lowering of wages is both the cause and effect of this lamentable fact of child labour, which from year to year assumes larger dimensions.

Child labour outside the Factory Laws assumes such various forms that it is very difficult to consider it from a general standpoint. As help in the hundreds of various "Home Industries," it presents its most abject form of abuse where the whole family works. As help in all agricultural work, such as gathering turnips, potatoes, etc., cattle keeping and others, it seems to be the most natural and wholesome work. And then there is a lot of child labour outside the home, such as professional messengers, distributors of papers, bread, etc., match-sellers, flower girls, domestic servants, and countless other occupations, almost each of which occupation bears in itself the faculty and the possibility of a wholesome sanitary, moral and educational influence on children. And so it may have been in past times, when father and mother were the natural teachers of their children in agriculture, housework, handicraft and industries. Having in their thoughts these old traditions, this is why so large a part of society—out of their own assured and comfortable social and material position—looks at any form of child labour only as an early training for the future working life, considering it a wholesome exercise, and never comparing it with the training of their own children. Even in recognising the evil as being such in a case too obvious to be denied, they are inclined to dismiss it with a cheap pity and to insist upon the impossibility of any change. They do not expect any alteration in the laws, and abhor the suggestion of a change which will protect the children even against their own parents if necessary. They contend that in this case parents must starve themselves and let their children starve unless the latter contribute to the income.

But indeed there is no other help, no other way of averting this danger which threatens to bring about the degeneration of whole classes of working people, than legislation analogous to Factory Laws. There is no denying that the bare fact of the

existence and efficiency of the Factory Laws is one of the principal reasons for carrying on industries in the home. Hereby they are free from any intrusive factory inspection, and enjoy all the advantages of an unlimited joint work between trained and untrained labourers, between men, women and children. Too ignorant, too poor, too miserable to organise, and by organisation to keep up a certain standard of life, they descend step by step down the sliding scale of wages, never to rise again.

It is just the history of Factory Laws in England, by which it is demonstrated most clearly that throughout the world labour *outside* the scope of the Factory Laws to-day does drive people pretty near to the deplorable situation of the factory workers in the first half of our century. We observe the same deplorable conditions of wages of home and family life which aroused public opinion in those times, and by this means enforced factory legislation. To prevent an increasing state of degeneration and decadence among the factory population one by one laws have been passed at long intervals, first, to protect women and children, and, later on, men too, for the benefit of the whole country.

If other countries have been spared those most terrible experiences of Lancashire parochial children, *i.e.*, "factory leg" and other deformities in body and soul, which England had to undergo, it is, indeed, far from being to their own credit. The industries of other countries would not have hesitated one moment to try the same exploitation of men, women and children, if they had been at the same height of development. As it was, England had been foremost a long time in adopting the doctrines of every man having the right to work as many hours and at any rate over or under living wages as his strength could stand. People tried to do so till offended nature took its revenge upon those monstrous abnormalities of overwork. We shudder at parents who did not shrink from abusing their children, even of four years, by work in the factory. The poor, weak legs, which were not strong enough to support the body for hours, were sustained by boots of wood and lead, in which they were obliged to stand. Hence the high scale of mortality among the children, the decreasing measure of the soldier, and last but not least, the devastation of house and family, with all the inevitable consequences, *i.e.*, moral and physical degeneration.

Thanks to the Factory Laws, as everyone knows, a regeneration took place which brought the English workman to a stage far beyond that of all other countries.

But who will not acknowledge in these painful remembrances

the right historical basis for judging the present state of industry as regards children unprotected by the Factory Laws. For just now all industrial countries are competing against each other with unheard-of energy and capital larger than at any previous time. All employers agree in finding factory inspection too stringent to work with advantage, though every year has in view new laws for the benefit of the labourers. Some of the industries can only change their factory system, but others contrive more and more to dissolve or restrict it, and to give out work to be done at home. There are many who keep both kinds of work going, and play one off against the other in order to reduce wages, charge the work with outlays, and adopt other such tricks. If factory people, who are mostly organised, cannot and will not accept these new conditions of labour, home industry surely will and must. It is not yet controlled by any legislation, registration or organisation, and consists of elements and working conditions so different as to make comparison impossible, and any estimation of the real wages rate of the work and effort for a standard rate of pay becomes difficult. Moreover, this work is mostly done by a *unit* of several members of the family, but paid in the course of time invariably only at the wages rate *for a single* person. And this, too, is reduced from time to time, according to whether competition for labour is increasing or labour is rare. The most revolting reports of *factory sweating* of the whole family nowadays find their exact counterpart in the home industry of every civilised country which boasts of its rich and extended industry and export.

I myself have seen in Germany matchboxes worked by children of four years old, the nimble fingers pasting some wood or paper, while another child has to finish. It seems like play to the observer, who omits to look closer, and has no eye for the haggard face, the bony limbs, and the lifeless expression of the features. And all this work is accomplished mostly in wretched dwellings where it seems impossible to live and to work.

The already traditional custom of child labour, in fact, drives the children to every possible occupation more or less injurious to their moral, physical and educational development.

In the last five years in Prussia the teachers of public schools have started several investigations, and made up valuable statistical material, as to a variety of professional occupations inside and outside the home. These mostly deal with the effect on school and after life in educational, sanitary, moral and economical respects; as to how many orphans and half orphans with step-

father or stepmother there are; as to the age of children and the age when they begin professional labour; as to how many, and what hours in the day, the children have to work. *Age* beginning in one case with four years, but in many more cases with five years; *time* ending often at midnight, or beginning at 4 o'clock, and including occupation from 3 to 11 hours, not calculating schooltime. In Germany there are nearly 25 per cent. of all children labouring outside the Factory Laws, as only at the age of fourteen they are allowed to work in factories.

But I doubt whether factory children in England, after half time in the factory is over, are released from other money-earning occupations when schooltime is over, or when school is not attended at all, as is the case in Germany.

And must we not confess that a child overworked in this manner, and mostly underfed, cannot have any other benefit from school life than the enjoyment of some moments of sleepy relief, not, indeed, allowed by the teacher, but required by nature itself. The body and mind strike without permission of the teacher, and without resistance from the child. As proof of depravity following this course, I may mention the statement that 70 per cent. of all the prisoners of a youthful age at the prison Plätzensee, near Berlin, to their seventh, eighth and ninth year, have been marketing, distributing papers, bread and other objects, and have worked in other industrial occupations. Of 1000 children of one city working industrially, 17 were to be recommended to rescue houses and compulsory education.

These facts tell their own tale. Indeed, the bare cold figures of this investigation made up in summaries, accompanied by observations, may well convince the most sceptical that it is high time for a remedy. And there is no other remedy than regulating child labour *outside* the factory by *factory* legislation.

A regulation on an international scale would be most effective, and perhaps another international conference, such as that inaugurated by the German Emperor at Berlin in the year 1892, would have a more satisfactory result.

It is principally the fear of stirring up the passions of these classes, by bringing them to a full consciousness of their desolate situation, which hinders more than spreads the light which is being brought to bear upon all this misery at present borne by these poor creatures with dull resignation.

Well, we must, nevertheless, stir up our own consciousness of all these facts, as well as the consciousness of the masses themselves. It will prove after all better than dull inability.

From the time when the national feeling was roused to the knowledge of those scandalous abuses in England down to this time, it is *public opinion* which has enforced *factory* legislation, firstly, to protect only the children under the Poor Law, then children in general, then women and men. And *public opinion* has since proved itself capable of redressing some of the worst sproutings of industrial individualism.

It is the duty of women in our time to care for all concerning women and children; to help those who cannot help themselves, at least with the united moral assistance of our national and international sisterhood in our Councils. Never was a more sacred task presented to women, for it is not a question of considering the individual woman and the individual child in their individual physical and moral misery, but it is a question of the depravity and degeneration of a large part of every generation. Hence we women have the rousing of public opinion as a duty imposed on us, and the seizing of every opportunity to open the eyes of those who don't see, and of those who willingly shut their eyes.

May all of us be true to the task we have undertaken, by co-operating to relieve the sad lot of those deplorable children, so as to regain for them a life worth the living, and at least a small part of that Eden which they have lost altogether—*The Paradise of Childhood*.

## Children Working in Mines and Dangerous Trades.

Signorina Montessori, M.D. (Italy),

Who spoke in Italian, gave a spirited exposition of a Bill about to be brought before her Government prohibiting the employment of children in the sulphur or other mines under the age of 14 years. She appealed to all present for support in bringing the objects of the Bill before English people, many of whom had influence in Italy.

She described the conditions under which quite young children work in these mines as most heartrending. The long hours, cramped positions, continual climbing up and down steps, the heavy weights they have to carry, the want of proper light and air, and the wretched pay all tend to crush all joy and healthful-

ness out of their young lives. In reply to questions, Signorina Montessori said that these conditions had not, except, perhaps, in a few exceptional cases, been improved as a result of the agitations which have been going on against them for some years ; and she also said that the mines under English proprietors are not better than the others.

## Children's Work in Spain.

Professor Tarrida del Marmoi, C.E. (Paris).

ACCORDING to the famous Spanish lawyer Alcubilla, Spain possesses no efficient legislative measures for the regulation of dangerous and unhealthy industries.

In reality there are a few regulations, but they are not observed. Thus, in 1865, Gonzalez Bravo, the Minister, issued a circular of rules for the prevention of accidents in the manufacture of explosives ; it did not prevent the subsequent disasters at the works of Aldaya, Figueras, Ripoll, etc., where no regulations had been observed, and terrible catastrophes were the result. Spain is, in truth, a country where laws are made to be disobeyed.

There were, moreover, up to 1873, no regulations controlling the work of women and children. At that time credit is due to the Spanish Republic, in spite of its brief existence, for passing a humane law on this subject. Unhappily, the wise Act of 1873 has never been put into force, numerous petitions, addressed by working men to the "Restoration" Government notwithstanding.

Add to this that in Spain the education of children is neither free nor compulsory, and that the misery of the labouring classes is so great that they are without means for bringing up their children, and it is plain why they rid themselves of their little ones by sending them at the tenderest age to work in the mines or the factories, no matter how dangerous to life and health may be the trades and industries at which the weak little creatures must toil ; there is no pity for them. In the country, no less than in the large towns, in factories as well as in business houses, the child is the drudge, a drudge doubly exploited, not only by the master, but also by his men, who abuse their superior power by heaping

on the child their own duties, and impose tasks that are beyond juvenile strength.

The children generally work 14 hours a day at any trade whatsoever; but in the mines their life is particularly cruel. Their wages scarcely ever exceed 5 pesetas (4s.) a week. And besides the poisonous gases which their youthful frames are bound to absorb they contract special diseases, the effects of which they will feel through life. Those who work in the lead mines are easily recognised by their leanness and by the death-like pallor of their skin; they soon fall a prey to the terrible disease which is well known in the country under the name of *colicos saturninos* (chronic lead poisoning), which can be relieved, but never completely cured, by means of potassium iodide.

In the copper, zinc, tin and magnesium mines of Spain, the children carry on their work under equally disgusting conditions. As for the unhappy workers who have been employed from earliest childhood in the rich mercury mines of Almaden, they soon become the prey of serious internal disorders, and of convulsive tremblings which trouble them for the rest of their lives.

In the chemical industries of Spain, most of which are so injurious to health, children play an important part. In those only too numerous branches of this industry where a man's strength can be dispensed with, the pitiless capitalist employs children, taking them on as young as possible, with a view to obtaining for a few pence work that ought to cost him some shillings. Here it is especially the manufacture of phosphorus matches, a very flourishing industry in Spain, which produces ravages that are the more serious, because the red or amorphous phosphorus is scarcely ever used in the Peninsula; nine-tenths of the matches produced contain ordinary phosphorus, the dreadful generator of necrosis.

The children's work varies in different districts of the Peninsula. In the Biscayan Provinces and in Andalusia they are chiefly employed in unloading ore; in Asturia they extract carbon; in Castile, Valencia, Galicia and Extremadura, they labour in the fields like beasts of burden, so that it is not rare to see among the peasants little girls of 13 who look like old women, wrinkled and weatherworn, crushed beneath the weight of overwhelming labour. In Aragon the children's toil is made to replace a proper system of irrigation; in that dry region they carry on their heads for considerable distances heavy pitchers, which are filled with water at the banks of the Elvo or its

tributaries, and carried to the distant fields. It is a heart-rending sight to behold these poor mites, whose heads seem to have sunk between their shoulders.

This state of things not only undermines the health, it also destroys the beauty of the race.

In industrial Catalonia the children pine away in factories which are dangerous to health and often to life.

Under these circumstances *we cannot speak of perfecting the regulations since there are none.*

#### DISCUSSION.

**Miss Catherine Webb** (London), in opening, said that there was a genuine desire for reform as well as a crying need for it. It was to be regretted that the nation was largely building up prosperity on the work of little children. It was not the object of this meeting to consider the liberty of the adult subject as yesterday, but the protection of the helpless.

**Mrs Riddick** (Belfast) spoke of the difficulties surrounding furtherance of the movement for lengthening the age for keeping children at school. They were drafted to the factories far too early in life.

**Miss Margaret Macmillan** (Member of Bradford School Board) asserted that the manufacturers of Bradford declared that half-timers were becoming fewer every year. It was not the children who wanted education on such points, but the parents, and if the latter were only approached in the proper spirit, good would be done.

**Mrs Amie Hicks** (London) gave particulars of a visit to the Lancashire and Yorkshire factory districts, and proved how very different were the half-time children, not only in appearance but in intellect.

**Mrs Moore** (Lincoln) thought that if the age for half-timers were raised to 14, country children would be deprived of the training they now had as agricultural workers.

**Miss Reid** said the secret of it all was that they as women loved cheap things, and manufacturers thus found that child labour paid.

**Mr J. R. MacDonald** (London) urged the improvement of the Factory Laws. Between the scope of the Education and the Factory Laws there was a period when children could be worked anyhow, and where they had every inducement to become loafers. Those who talked and thought that teaching children



to pick potatoes and herd sheep was giving them an education had a most pernicious influence. These things have to be done, but a man who can do nothing else in these days is a danger to the community. The law relating to home employment should be strengthened; public authorities should have more power given them for regulating child work on the streets, and if children are habitually sent to school too tired to learn, parents and employers should be prosecuted.

**Mme. Rusky** (Sweden) and **Mrs Dowson** (London) also spoke, the latter advising compulsory training in manual labour for all boys. It was disgraceful that education in this country should stop short at mere reading and writing.

**Miss Fraser** stated that boys in country districts showed a disinclination to be taught any trade or regular calling.

**Mr Herbert Burrows** (London), the last speaker, urged that the difficulty would only be solved by the extension of compulsory attendance at school to 16, with not merely literary education but an extended course of technical instruction. It was awful to think that the present civilisation was built up on the slow murder of our children. Half-time must be entirely abolished—it would be abolished in a week even now, if the children of the rich had to take their place in the factories with the children of the poor. The cry about scarcity of labour was nonsense. Let all classes take their share of labour, and there would be no scarcity and no overwork. Whoever else was considered, it was essential that the children should be delivered from the degradation of our commercialism.

## SCIENTIFIC TREATMENT OF DOMESTIC SERVICE.

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- (A) GENERAL TRAINING.
- (B) GENERAL CONDITIONS.
- (C) PEOPLE'S KITCHENS.
- (D) LADIES IN SERVICE.
- (E) UNITARY HOMES.

GREAT HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, AFTERNOON.

MRS MARTINDALE in the Chair.

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### Scientific Training of Domestic Servants.

Miss Clementina Black (Great Britain).

THE difficulty about domestic servants appears to be twofold. (1.) There are not enough servants. (2.) The servants that there are are not good enough.

(1.) The supply of servants is insufficient, because there is an increasing disinclination on the part of the girls to enter domestic service. If we consider the causes of this disinclination, we shall probably find its root in the fact that domestic service has not

followed the industrial evolution of most other callings, but remains in its essence a feudal relation. The servant lives, not among her own people, but in the household of her employer; she is cut off from her own family, and to a great extent from her employer's; she cannot freely receive her own friends, and has not the same opportunities of acquaintance leading to marriage. Her hours are not fixed, and she has no time of which she is absolute mistress. Moreover, the trade of domestic service is considered socially inferior. These conditions are displeasing to girls of the class from which servants are recruited, and the supply of recruits diminishes.

The question is not whether the prejudice is wise or right; the point is that the prejudice exists and will continue to exist. If we would do away with it, we must alter the conditions disliked—that is, we must approximate the conditions of service to those of other callings.

This can be done by giving the servant fixed hours of freedom, and in those hours free opportunity of social intercourse, and by abandoning, once for all, the idea that the details of her conduct, when off duty, may be regulated by her employer. The simplest way of effecting this change will be, in most cases, and especially for people of moderate means, to let the servant live out, as the factory girl, the sewing woman, the elementary schoolmistress and high school teacher do. That this change would suit the servant is pretty clearly shown by the fact that even at present there is no difficulty in getting non-resident servants.

Of course there are drawbacks to this method, as to every other method of human action. The servant may bring in infection; she will almost certainly fail—not perhaps in promise but in practice—to come early in the morning. This latter evil will have to be met, partly by a certain degree of screwing up, partly by the increased use of labour-saving appliances, such as gastrings for heating water, partly, we doubt not, in the case of employers who must be early, by some amount of household industry on the employer's own part.

(2.) The servants that there are are not good enough, because (a) they are not accustomed in their own houses to the life, habits and appliances of the houses in which they become servants, and therefore need to acquire new habits—in other words, to be taught a trade, or rather trades; (b) they are not generally taught this trade.

We find ourselves confronted with the question of how the trade of domestic service should be taught, and we see that the

training falls, like all other training, into the two branches of theory and practice, and that the practice of household work demands a house to practise on and in. Practical training of the kind required exists in various homes, but there is not yet nearly enough of it. No servant ought to enter service without having both learned the theoretic principles of her business, and been accustomed to put them in practice.

The sort of change which has been undergone by sick nursing needs to be undergone by domestic service. Sick nurses were, not so very long ago, untrained persons, very much like inferior charwomen. Now their number has vastly increased, they are all above a certain level of general education, and are all elaborately trained. They are proud of their profession and of its uniform. There is no reason why servants should not be trained with equal thoroughness, feel equal pride in their calling, and be regarded with equal respect by the public. Under such conditions women of higher social standing would probably enter the calling of service as they have entered that of nursing.

The few so-called "lady helps" who have entered the labour market have not succeeded, and the reason of their failure is indicated in the words of a lady who had tried several, and declared that "they were not ladies, and they were not helps." These ladies were mostly quite as untrained as the average servant, and therefore no better. To introduce the untrained of any class is merely to perpetuate the present chaos. But there have been systematic efforts to lift domestic service into the position of a highly-skilled trade. One such is the attempt of the Women's Industrial Council, which has formed a small body of skilled charwomen, all thoroughly trained and competent. The Norland Institute, where ladies are trained as children's nurses, has touched another part of the ground to be covered.

A third point to be considered in any reform of service is the insecurity of service at present existing. Any employer can, by refusing to give a character, practically debar a servant from getting an occupation. The danger is not imaginary, or even very uncommon. It is greatly to be desired that some registration of "characters" could be carried out, the servant bringing her recommendation and her stated length of service every time she changed her situation, and these particulars being kept on record.

To sum up, then, the conditions of service must be so altered as to become acceptable to the workers concerned; the calling must be recognised as a highly-skilled one, demanding and receiving a high degree of systematic training; and some method must

be devised by which employment shall no longer depend wholly upon one employer's report. Without the first step we shall continue to have a short supply of servants; without the second our servants will continue inefficient; without the third a certain proportion of cruel injustice will continue every year to be exercised upon women who cannot help themselves.

## General Conditions of Domestic Service.

Mrs William Stead, Jun. (Great Britain).

It is universally admitted that the conditions of domestic service are far from satisfactory. The cry for relief comes from mistress and maid alike. It is heard in America and Canada, in Australasia, on the Continent, and in the British Isles. There must be something fundamentally wrong with a system of service which gives such widespread dissatisfaction. Before any radical change can be made, the facts must be carefully collected and a workable theory of reform advanced. Men of science have devoted years to the study of the lives and habits of the smallest insects, while the study of the lives and habits of many human beings has not been deemed worthy of so much as a name. Even the leaders of the labour movement fail to recognise, probably the weakest of their sisters, the domestic servants. But these workers will have to be recognised as forming a part of the great labour problem, which students of social science are striving to unravel by careful investigation. The sooner the real situation is generally understood, the sooner remedies will be found and applied.

Happily, signs are not wanting that women are beginning to seriously *study* the problem. A most carefully compiled and suggestive contribution to the scientific investigation of this subject is to be found in a book entitled *Domestic Service*, by Miss Lucy M. Salmon, of Vassar College. All interested in this subject cannot do better than carefully study her volume.

The universality of this trouble—and it is a very pressing trouble—shows it is not merely a question of following the golden rule. It is a question of economics just as much as the currency question is. As a woman who has had some practical experience of domestic service on both sides of the Atlantic, I am convinced that the root of the evil is the same all the world over. Women have been clamouring loudly for fifty years for their

right to be recognised as human beings. Now, many of these women are unwilling to recognise that their servants are *women*. They are too frequently regarded as creatures of an inferior race. Many mistresses do not seem to comprehend that their servants have feelings and hopes like unto themselves. Of course, I am not blind to the fact that the servant is often to blame; but it is for the more enlightened woman to find how to make present conditions impossible.

Mistresses everywhere constantly complain of work poorly done, lack of interest, eye-service, and a desire for continual change of situation. Often they must employ unskilled labour, because there are no trained servants to be had. What is the reason for this? In most cases the servant has no interest nor care concerning the family, and very often only a "picked-up knowledge" of household matters. Anybody is supposed to be wise enough to be a servant. Mr Joseph Jefferson says, "I am satisfied that domestic melancholy sets in with the butler. He is the melodramatic villain of society."

There are disadvantages in all trades, but those of domestic service seem to be the most unwillingly borne. In *Life and Labour of the People* even the cautious, kindly Mr Charles Booth avers, "Domestic service, though lucrative and in many ways luxurious, is not popular." The hours are very long, the work monotonous, there are few free evenings and Sundays, and there is less personal independence than in other occupations. Many domestic servants feel very keenly that they live in a family but have no real part in the family life. A maid must not even smile at the humorous stories she hears as she waits upon her employers. There is usually no place for her to receive her friends. Other workers are not so frequently reminded that they are near, if not at, the very bottom of the social scale. In no other class of people is such servility of manner demanded by the employer. There is no hope of any great promotion, and therefore no chance for ambition as in business generally. These conditions turn many intelligent women, who actually prefer domestic employment, away to other kinds of work. They naturally consider it better to be a sewing-woman at starvation wages than a cook in an average household with excellent pay. The kindest treatment, besides time, money and health are nothing when weighed in the balance with that "subtle thing a woman calls life." Life is dearer than all else, and the domestic servant wants to live her life in her own way. Apparently the social blight is the great disturber of the peace. The social stigma attaching to

domestic service must be removed before competent help can be secured.

The housewife very naturally asks, "Well, can anything be done?" Yes, a great deal can be done. Much is being unconsciously done, and much is deliberately planned. The training schools for servants, cookery schools, classes, etc., are great steps in advance, but they do not yet reach those who are most deeply in need of assistance.

It appears to many of those who have studied the history of the problem that the chance of the greatest improvement lies along the lines that seem to have been opened by the evolution of social conditions. In a word, much, if not all, the work of the household might be carried on by people living outside, and paid, as other working people are paid, by the hour. At first thought it seems impracticable, but it is already being done in many departments. The Association of Trained Charwomen, established by the Women's Industrial Council of Buckingham Street, is an actual example of what can be done.

Women are such conservative beings, as a rule, that unless you can prove to them that a thing has been tested and not found wanting, they are slow to try any new idea. But once they know it is a good thing of ancient lineage, they grasp it eagerly. According to Miss Mary Paul, the custom of paying board wages in place of food is increasing in London.

The great strides in the use of machinery have revolutionised the labour problem, but the household arrangements have not been reorganised to keep up with the times. All work and study to-day tends to extreme specialisation in order to produce the best result. This specialisation must be more freely advocated in domestic service before that service can be satisfactory to the people of to-day. We must not expect to do twentieth century work with a system of the Dark Ages.

Our grandmothers would have thought it a very poor household indeed that did not do its own spinning and weaving, and make its own clothing, shoes, stockings, soap, candles, butter and cheese, and even its own furniture. Most people long ago decided that all these things could quite well be made by specialists enjoying their own firesides. It is not long since laundry work, cake and bread-making and window cleaning were considered necessary parts of the household work. But these and many other things are fast following spinning and weaving. The preparing of vegetables and many other foods, cleaning of silver and brass, sweeping and cleaning generally might all be so disposed of. It

only remains to find all the other tasks that can either be taken out of the house or done by the piece or hour to liberate ourselves as employers and employees from the scourge of present day domestic service.

As a result the workers of our homes might become self-respecting, skilled labourers, each individual taking up the work she could do best with a confident hope of promotion. The domestic would be more independent and more honourable, and the social stigma would disappear. The domestic servant does not want more done for her, but a chance to do for herself.

## General Conditions of Domestic Service.

**Mrs Susan Young Gates (United States).**

WITHIN the walls of the home, as well as outside those walls, are to be met the perplexing problems of capital and labour; the mistress standing for the one, the maid for the other. Hitherto these problems have received, in the main, only empirical solution, often at great cost of means and nervous friction, yet, not infrequently, in a way approaching ethical justice.

Pure instinct enables many women to thread their way through the labyrinths of domestic service—an instinct which teaches them to manage a house as the ancient mariners did their ships. Such a mistress will treat her maids with kind consideration, will govern her children with mild firmness, and will perform her various duties so skilfully that much leisure will be left her for social and intellectual pursuits. As a result, the respect, fealty and love of servants, children, husband and friends are generously accorded her. Yet, ask this ideal mistress how she accomplishes these results and she will answer, "I do not know." She does know, practically, how to clear away every domestic difficulty, but the how or the why she cannot tell. The ideal homes of poetry and fiction are often made by this class of women.

For one such woman, however, we have a hundred who fail wholly or in part. Ask the women who fail why they fail and they too will answer, "I do not know."

There are servants (we call them "girls" in America) so gifted by nature and skilful through training that they are denominated by their fortunate employers as "treasures"; but ask either mistress or maid the secret of this excellence, and you will get only a vague answer. The fact is, while empirical methods are



often admirable, they can be acquired only by imitation, by living under the constant influence of good example, and thereby absorbing, as it were, correct habits.

In European countries, where household economy changes but little from generation to generation, and where mistress and maid are, for the most part, born to their respective stations, the method of learning to do by doing, though slow to eliminate errors, is nevertheless protected by its very conservatism from serious failures. But in new countries, where social conditions fluctuate, and especially where other occupations than home-making absorb the time devoted to education, rational or scientific methods must supplant empirical, if home life is to play the part in future civilisation that it has played in the past.

The homes of to-day do not offer the opportunity for home training of daughters and maids which they did fifty or even twenty years ago. The reason is to be found in the crowded conditions of city life, the increase of half-home life in flats and hotel apartments, and the pressure of mental activity generated by clubs and other organised centres of intellectual culture. Especially is this true in America, where there are so few restrictions of tradition or inheritance. Now it is not sufficient to deplore this disputing of family traditions; we must philosophically meet the difficulty. What then will constitute rational and scientific training for domestic service? Whatever the answer may be, it involves two necessary conditions: first, the training of both mistress and maid; and second, the fostering of a warm, human sympathy between them as correlative factors in home-making.

The education should begin with the mistress. Hers must be the mind that shall give unity to all the domestic forces from garret to cellar. Is it not a libel upon home-making to suppose that the mistress can remain æsthetically ignorant of real home economy and yet assume to direct its forces? No amount of learning in ulterior directions can compensate for ignorance here—that is, if the woman seriously contemplates becoming a home-maker.

What, then, should be the nature of training for the mistress? Briefly put, it should cover all the details which are involved in housekeeping. We have military schools, schools of technology and agricultural schools. Why not housekeeping and home-making schools?

In America the course for mistress and maid would be identical; for the maid of to-day is the mistress of to-morrow,

and the professional cook is honoured among women, and often occupies a dean's chair in a college. It is not so much that the cooks have evolved into ladies, as that ladies have dignified cookery.

The education for domestic service, to be perfect, should be based on empirical skill, the skill developed in the home kitchen, followed by theoretical teaching and technical training in the school. All trades, all professions, require strict apprenticeship, whether the graduate is to become workman or master, assistant or professor; the profession of home-making and the trade of home work should be no exception.

Let the future mistress be taught by actual doing how much strength is required to wash, how much skill is needed for cookery, and what time is consumed in fine laundering, and when she comes to preside over her own household forces she will be more likely to judge with justice and administer with impartiality. Let her learn through experience to have patience with the naturally slow worker whose final results are satisfactory, and teach her through the weariness of actual toil not to add unnecessary and extra burdens to the maid who works quickly and well. On the other hand, teach the maid something beyond the work side of her daily duties, that head and hand may unite; teach her the beautiful laws of chemistry which control the processes of her bread-making, the flashing point of oils, the coagulation of albumen, and the danger from bacteria which lingers in the dust-laden curtains and hangings. By so doing you shall dignify her daily task into the work which forms the foundation of the life of the world; for it is intelligence which rules the world, whether gained rationally or by experience.

The question of how this training is to be accomplished confronts us.

Two forces may be brought into operation to solve the problem. If the cultured classes will inaugurate the study of domestic service, and throw all the weight of their influence and thought into making the study popular, the fear of being thought menial, which is the greatest negative obstacle, will be overcome. Then if men and women of means will equip schools for the investigation of domestic questions, and women will themselves throw much of their newly-acquired impetus into the solution of these difficulties, we may hope for great things in the future.

As to the kind of women to be chosen to lead out in such

movements, you remember the Arabian proverb. Let the woman who knows, and knows that she knows, organise and develop such a school.

Then comes the question, What should be taught?

Within the curriculum we may hope to find classes in all branches of domestic work—the consideration of cookery; the study of clothing, æsthetic and hygienic, as well as the history and preparation of the same; physical culture in its fullest extent; the care of infants and children, with underlying principles of child-culture and kindergarten methods; the history and solution of all the old home labours now performed by machinery, such as lighting, heating, canning, weaving and colouring; a course of domestic hygiene, special physiology for girls, home nursing, and home sanitation. The study of the beautiful will naturally follow; architecture, with its laws of form and colour, and the principles of art which underlie the equipment and decoration of a home. And as ethics enter largely, if they do not predominate in all social economic questions, we must require the girl to study in this new college-to-be the ethical relations between capital and labour in the household.

Ethical culture is indeed the keynote of just treatment in domestic service, as in all other human relations. The sympathetic chord which reaches from heart to heart, vibrating at every touch of joy or sorrow, this it is which lifts the human race above its own plane and into the divine. Call it Christianity, call it humanitarianism, call it what you will, it is that spiritual force which draws us to each other and links us to God.

We have learned that every emotion, every thought, follows law and operates upon undeviating principles—all more or less clearly set forth by science. The laws of human sympathy can be reduced to simple rules. A mistress may learn when to speak and when to keep silence; which favours to grant, which to refuse; when to extend sympathy, and how to administer reproof. She can be taught the difference between weak indulgence and prudent generosity. She can learn in part the extent of her own responsibility when she permits a maid to grow overbearing and insolent. In short, she can study at least the basic principles of intelligent mistresshood; and experience, coupled with a loving determination to succeed, will gradually transform the weakest or most tyrannical mistress into the lovable, servable woman; for no woman is a weakling

or tyrant because she chooses to be so, but chiefly because she doesn't know any better, and no one has tried to teach her better.

## People's Kitchens.

**Frau Lina Morgenstern (Germany). Read by Frau  
Rosenheim.**

THE greatest social problem of our time is the conciliation of rich and poor through improved conditions of life, especially among earners of scanty wages.

The enhancement of their material comfort is the most obvious and fundamental method of inducing them to benefit by improved moral culture and technical training, and of helping them towards a happier and worthier life. Hence, before attempting to realise the ideals of national culture, we must solve the problem of improving the health and industrial efficiency of the masses. The solution consists in supplying the two main necessities of life—the possibility of obtaining good and sufficient food, and a wholesome home. The health of every section of society depends on the food supply of the people; for times of drought and famine invariably bring with them the most malignant epidemics.

The food supply of the masses and the cheap preparation of nourishing meals for the poor were questions which occupied the attention of Benjamin Thomson, Count Rumford, the famous physicist and philanthropist, at the end of last century. Through his efforts soup kitchens were opened during periods of famine in 1818, 1846 and 1847. Later on many German towns opened similar soup depots. Under honest management and careful supervision of the soup making, these kitchens were a blessing to the needy. In Leipsic, Chemnitz, and especially in Hanover, through the efforts of Georg Egestorff, cookshops and eating-houses for labourers were instituted; these were the first attempts to satisfy the demand for food of the poor, not through charitable agencies, but by economic methods.

But the social importance of such institutions for feeding the masses only became evident in 1866, when I formed the plan of instituting People's Kitchens that were not in any way to be

regarded as charities, but as places where people of pinched means of every social rank might enjoy a nourishing meal at a price much below that at which they could have prepared the food for themselves—in fact, at the cost price of wholesale production.

I was fully aware that the success of such an institution would depend entirely on the disinterestedness, energy and perseverance of managers and workers. I foresaw that this organisation would inaugurate a new era in the public weal, and in the part played by women in the care of the poor. As soon as it could be proved that by honest administration wholesome and nourishing food could be prepared at comparatively trifling prices, a more careful control of the provisioning department of almshouses, hospitals, barracks and prisons was sure to follow, and reforms would be effected in due course.

I also felt that with the liberty of association and organisation we were taking upon ourselves the pressing responsibility of relieving the lot of those who were all but succumbing under the weight of their trouble, who failed to maintain themselves in spite of the fiercest personal exertion, and of those who only succeeded by dint of unspeakable privation and suffering. State and municipality, too, should assist all unhappy men and women who are on the point of parting with their last possessions, who cannot of themselves pave the way along which return to self-dependence is alone possible.

The People's Kitchens are to prevent the starving or half-starved working man from becoming a recipient of alms; they are to supply him with at least one wholesome, satisfying meal a day, at a price within easy reach of his scanty wages.

Think what this means to him. Remember the usual state of an indigent person's table and cupboard. Consider the time, care and knowledge the wife of a poor labourer can give to the preparation of the simplest meal. But even if she has the necessary knowledge, and does her very best, she is bound to waste time, fuel and effort in preparing, and money in buying, at exorbitant prices, paltry quantities of food for a small household; her soup or stew is sure to lose in quantity and quality when she has bought the ingredients, a pennyworth at a time, from costers and butchers almost as poor as herself. To this must be added the labour and inconvenience of carrying the food to father, husband or brother at the distant works, when the tired man generally has to eat it cold and tasteless, while the woman has had to neglect her children and housework to cook it and bring it to him. Single men are obliged to frequent poor

inns, where they rarely get a wholesome, satisfactory meal, while the obligation to drink is a source of additional expense.

There is but one way of checking this waste of power and wealth in small households; in one way only can we secure economic relief and wholesome, regular meals, not only to single men and women workers, but for the permanent improvement of the food supply of working-men's homes.

Think of the saving of time and effort, the relief from worry and annoyance, to the poor, over-worked wife of the labourer, whom we enable to give to husband and children a good, hearty meal, obtained ready-made from the People's Kitchens, at a lower price than she would have had to pay for the bare ingredients. Picture her spending the time thus saved on the care of her children, on the rooms and the clothes, and on a few extra attentions to the comfort of her husband.

Food not only cheaper than, but vastly superior to, that which is within the means of poor workers at home or at cheap eating-houses, can be procured through the wholesale supply of meals to large masses, where such supply is organised on the principle of the co-operation of producers for the sole benefit of consumers.

That all the poorer inns depend for their profit solely on the sale of alcoholic drinks is a well-known fact which speaks for itself. It also proves that the People's Kitchens advance the cause of temperance, since an efficient supply of rational food lessens the craving for spirits.

My leading considerations in favour of founding the People's Kitchens may be summed up as follows:—

1. A large number of people, say from 300 to 1000, can be supplied with good meals by the use of but one kitchen and one fire, under the superintendence of a comparatively small staff, from 4 to 8 persons respectively, while under ordinary conditions hundreds of housewives in hundreds of kitchens absorb time and strength over the preparation of inferior food at greater expense.

2. We secure advantageous purchase of first-rate foodstuffs, etc., at wholesale prices, while the poor, as a rule, have to pay dearly for second-class goods.

3. We supply well-flavoured food, selected and prepared according to tested recipes, and blended on scientific lines, with a view to efficient nutritive strength, and prepared under the supervision of excellent cooks.

The ideal of a wholesome and plentiful food supply for the masses of the people can be realised more readily by large

humanitarian associations, working with ample means, and securely counting on enormous consumption, than by small capitalists, who are obliged to work each particular eating-house on the narrow lines of securing the largest possible profit for themselves.

4. The People's Kitchens can so vary their daily menu that not only the healthy but the sick, not only adults but young children, can be readily served with suitable dishes.

Quite unsurpassed has been the success, financial and social, attained by the Berlin People's Kitchens in the production of well-seasoned food, in ample quantities, at very moderate prices.

At mid-day we give—

One basin of soup and a plateful of vegetable

stew, with meat, boiled or baked . . . for 25pf. = 3d.

In fact, rather less than 3d.

Or 1½ pints of soup, or of vegetable boiled

in soup or milk, with three pieces of meat for 25pf. = 3d.

1½ pints of vegetables, with one slice of meat for 15pf. = 1½d.

1½ pints of vegetables, with meat gravy . . for 10pf. = 1½d.

A child's helping of vegetables . . . for 5pf. = ½d.

A large cup of coffee, cocoa, or tea, with

milk and sugar . . . for ½d.

For the evening meal we give—

A basin of soup . . . for 6pf. = ¾d.

One pound of potatoes and one herring . . for 10pf. = 1½d.

Or other fish, fried with potatoes . . . for 10pf. = 1½d.

One glass of milk . . . for 5pf. = ¾d.

A roll of white bread . . . for 2pf.

Less than ½d.

A slice of bread and dripping . . . for 3pf. = ¼d.

The manager and the cook of each kitchen are held responsible for the good quality of all the food. Each course is tested by the superintendent or her substitutes, and by the honorary lady visitors, one of whom is always present during the serving of the meal, as it is her duty to taste the dishes and supervise the cleanliness and correct quantity of food served out to each customer; the lady visitor also gives out the ticket which each one must purchase from a paid officer of the kitchen stationed at the entrance. When the meal is over she examines the food

<sup>1</sup> One Mark of German money = 100 Pfennige (pf.) = One Shilling English money. [Translator's Note.]

that is unsold, enters it in the books, together with the number of tickets distributed, and hands over the unsold tickets to the clerk, whose duty it is to carry them, together with the account books, etc., to the central office, where the day's transaction is finally controlled and settled.

On the superintendent of the kitchen devolves the ordering of provisions, the keeping of stock and other accounts, and the control of the quantities of foodstuffs, etc., to be worked up each day, and the rules of the association oblige her to take stock at the end of every month. She is also responsible for obtaining the services of an efficient staff of honorary lady helpers. Her office, as well as that of the committee of helpers, is altogether voluntary, and not one of these ladies has any pecuniary interest in the income or expenditure of the institution.

For more special information, giving all the details of organisation, etc., I must refer you to my published works on *People's Kitchens*.

We all work joyfully for the welfare of the people, and we have had the satisfaction of seeing our institutions copied by one great city after another, and by many proprietors of large factories, with a view to securing wholesome nourishment for large numbers of people, and checking the abuse of alcoholic liquor.

## Ladies in Service.

Mrs Walter Ward (Great Britain).

I WAS invited to speak on the subject of ladies in domestic service because several years ago I founded the Norland Institute for training ladies as children's nursery nurses.

But I am glad of this great public occasion to reiterate what I have all along endeavoured to make clear, that, much as I respect domestic service, I do not call the nurture, training and care of young children "*domestic*" work—I call it "*educational*" work. Skilled service has now become universally recognised as essential in the care of the sick body; and she who faithfully renders service commands universal respect and gratitude.

The trained certificated teacher obtains an equal share of respect, and my aim is to have the *nursery nurse* on an absolute equality with both the trained certificated teacher and the cer-



tificated hospital nurse, if socially she belongs to the same class as they do, and if she has taken as much pains as they have to prepare herself for her especial kind of work.

The nursery nurse enters service, and serves the little, helpless body in the same spirit as the hospital nurse takes in charge the body of a sick child of a larger growth. The trained nursery nurse guides and trains the mind and heart of the little one with as much intelligence and care as is put forth by the certificated teacher when the child arrives at a later stage; for it is the same body, mind and spirit that is to be cared for throughout, and the best results of harmonious development may be looked for where a harmonious system of training has been followed from infancy.

A nursery nurse should therefore be sought primarily because she loves children and is qualified to care for the physical needs of the little child; secondarily, because she is interested in its moral, religious and intellectual development; and lastly, and in quite a minor degree, because she is domestically inclined, and able and willing in her spare moments to sew for the children, and keep all bright and clean around them.

This is the spirit that underlies the teaching given at the Norland Institute, and I do not believe that in seven years we should have attracted over 400 girls (chiefly drawn from the upper middle classes) to take up this work if we had classified it as *domestic service* instead of as skilled labour, on a par with the work of trained certificated teachers and hospital nurses. The supply has created the demand, and we now find hundreds of modern parents gratefully accepting our modern conditions and adapting their households to meet our modern requirements.

So much for "Ladies in Service." Seven years ago I was told that my scheme was an unworkable dream; to-day, as far as "Ladies as Nursery Nurses" is concerned, it is a very practical reality.

But whether ladies make good domestic servants is quite another matter.

The scheme has now been tried under varying conditions ever since Mrs Crawshay proposed and worked it more than thirty years ago; it has made very little headway. My own idea is that ladies are less qualified than ever for domestic service. Our modern system of education for all classes is against it. Do I propose to abolish the *resident* domestic servant?

Most emphatically No! But I would reserve the *resident* posts for ladies and others who would give personal sympathy

and render services of love. The actual labour of the household must be done eventually by *day* labour, and I see no reason to expect, as a matter of course, that the woman who is an excellent polisher or scrubber, should be expected to apply liniment to my body, shake up my pillows, or button my boots!

In all grades of society we find girls who are homeless, friendless, or delicate, and quite unfit for any form of day work. In all grades of society are to be found thousands who love to render tender, loving service, and are capable of becoming personally attached to their employers, looking on them, their children, their houses and their furniture as their own, and taking as much or more pride in all of it than the actual owners. These render loving and devoted service far beyond what their wages can pay for.

To these women service is a sacred calling and the most beautiful vocation on earth. Their wage-earning period begins early, and practically never altogether ceases. But let us pass on gradually, step by step. Women are beginning to see that they must provide a complete life for themselves—work, liberty of thought and action, personal freedom, rest, with means to enjoy that rest, and perhaps enough in addition to make provision for old age, and to maintain two or three male and female relatives. All these considerations have to be faced. I believe that at the present time *personal freedom* is more dearly prized by all classes than even rest from toil or high wages, and it is just this lack of personal freedom that gives domestic service its particular sting, quite as much for ladies as for girls from the working classes; and in the future we must draw a strict line between domestic labour and domestic service. The subject of domestic labour is one of national importance, for no nation can eventually thrive where the citizens of that nation despise all those arts that help to make up the national ideal of a home, and where they look down on those, *i.e.*, servants or others, who adopt home-making as an occupation. Perhaps the most difficult task we have is to get *men* to view the matter seriously, for women will not adopt a calling that is looked down on by their fathers, brothers and lovers, and this is one of the reasons why thousands of girls compete with men in what *they* regard as good wage-earning careers. I am convinced that thousands of girls, now employed in workrooms, shops and offices, would be equally happy, earn higher wages, and lead more useful lives, if they could be attracted back to *domestic work*, both resident and

non-resident. Thirty years ago it was a disgrace to a woman of the genteel classes to earn her own living, now it is the ambition of many rich women to earn money.

Many domestic occupations lie open before women who now struggle for a pittance as High School teachers, sick nurses, and clerks of all kinds. While in the domestic arts, *teachers* of cookery, housewifery, laundry work, needlework, are being manufactured in our Polytechnics in surprising numbers. I say "surprising," because still the majority cling to the idea that it is more genteel to *teach* than to *work*.

All these occupations and a host of others have been adopted by women because they are *novel*, and because they have not the sting of bondage attached to them with its endless, humiliating conditions.

Therefore I do not believe that any effort to induce ladies to take up the employments that have been discarded by the daughters of our working classes will meet with any permanent success; and, as I have already hinted, I think it probable that my more revolutionary scheme of completely reorganising domestic labour will appear to the public better than any attempt to promote the introduction of ladies into domestic service under the old worn-out conditions.

For I regard the occupation of *home-making* as one of the highest, and not one of the lowest, forms of female labour; but we must get it classed as a trade or occupation involving a recognised system of apprenticeship and training, and in this work we may be greatly helped by our Polytechnics and Technical Training Schools, and by the organised bodies that exist in the country for the regulation of female labour.

It has been stated that the occupation of *home-making* does not compare favourably with a *trade*, because married women cannot take it up in later life except as charwomen. Other trades and occupations are also open to this objection, but when domestic service is reorganised there are many branches that could quite well be taken up again by married women.

The fact remains that domestic work must continue to exist in every country under varying circumstances; but inventions, co-operation, machinery, wholesale manufactories, steam power which has facilitated the conveyance of merchandise, all these have tended to supersede many of the old home domestic industries.

It only remains for us to expend a little intelligent effort to reorganise what remains to be done, and then our homes will

once more become what we wish; and the vexed problem of domestic service will be solved, because so many women will have seen fit to take up domestic labour as their honoured trade.

## Unitary Homes.

**Miss Jane Hume Clapperton (Great Britain).**

DOMESTIC service is a specialised term indicating a system of home-life in the upper and middle classes of society—a system in which household work is ordinarily performed by members of a lower social class. The general trend of evolution, however, has created an impulse to educate the masses, and one of the first results of education in this country has been to produce a widespread distaste to the life of a domestic servant.

Now, I hold the opinion that by the creation of an entirely new system based on co-operation in household labour and association in domestic living we may best overcome the servant difficulty.

If we look only to that great middle section of society where refinement prevails and incomes barely suffice to procure the comforts and amenities of civilisation, very serious changes are apparent in family life, irrespective of the servant difficulty.

Unmarried daughters no longer stay at home. They go out into the industrial area; and when not in hospital their shelter is a lodging or boarding-house, while their home is merely a holiday-house, or place to rest in when fagged. Unmarried sons make the paternal home little of a dwelling-place. Their comings and goings are casual.

They may sleep and eat there, but their mental activities, indoor recreations, and social interests centre much more in their club. School education is another element that weakens family life. Children accustomed to the excitement of school find home tame. They emancipate themselves as much as possible. It is no exaggeration to say that the young of this generation are imbued from infancy with the restless spirit of the age.

This restless spirit denotes a new era in the world's history, an epoch of fresh vitality and vigour in the race. The young are preparing for a wider, fuller life than any earlier generation

enjoyed. Consequently their requirements are greater, and the isolated home is wholly inadequate to meet these requirements. Moreover, their budding capacities for new pursuits entail expense.

Family sentiment, too, is not what it was. In our progress towards cosmopolitanism, "the taste for the family life once supposed to be the special characteristic of England, has, to a great extent, been lost. The claims of society have acquired precedence of the duties of home." Moreover, our ideals have changed. Girl's day-dreams once were of home duty and love, now, their noblest ambitions are to share with men the world's labour. A vague reflection, however, of the early ideal lingers, and when one states frankly that the family home is in decadence and will pass away, to be followed by some new form of home life, a host of half sentimental prejudices bristles up into opposition. This survival of feeling will delay transition from isolated to associated homes, but it seems to me that transition must take place if humanity is to retain the sweetness of kindred ties and the valuable domestic qualities.

In the reconstruction of home-life on a rational and stable basis, a preliminary step is to create a strong mental picture of a scientific unitary home.

An understanding of the nature of personal habits is necessary, and to formulate rules based on their importance relatively to general interests. Cleanliness, orderliness, punctuality are essential to general comfort, while conventional etiquette only stiffens manners and destroys the geniality of domestic freedom. Simple rules of a positive kind must be strictly observed; but the negative rule of non-interference with personal habits—if un-hurtful to others—will be the most stringent of all. For happiness is the great object to attain, and a necessary condition to that end is the free interaction of social units without intrusive interference.

The ideal group will comprise a sufficiency of children to make early education in the home possible, and a sufficient number of adults to provide an educational staff, a medical and nursing staff, and an adequate staff of skilled domestic workers. The principle of equality will rule, guarding the rights of children to a treatment without favouritism, and giving to each adult an equal social position, responsibility and personal respect whatever the nature of his or her function. No useful work will be deemed degrading, and all household work will be paid so that girls become self-supporting without necessarily leaving home.

Personal despotism will disappear. The system is in no wise patriarchal. The home becomes a self-acting republic. Authority for internal regulation is supplied by committees chosen by the members from among themselves, and subject to frequent change.

Organised co-operation has superseded individual methods in all industrial undertakings, and has produced a saving in money and material, and a saving of labour by the introduction of machinery. In domestic work labour-saving machinery hardly exists. There has been no spur to its invention in this country under our present system of household labour. It seems to me irrational to doubt that unitary homes would cost proportionately much less than the isolated homes kept up. But however great the economic advantages, these are trifling when compared with benefits to be reaped in the regions of intellectual and moral feelings.

What is wanted is an environment in which both sexes may learn their *humanities*, for these are the only sure foundation of a pure religious life. To sum up, the position is this:—some radical change in domestic life and domestic service is fast becoming an evolutionary necessity. A constructive policy is, I think, possible—a policy to economise labour and money, and to simplify life, while enlarging human capacity and increasing happiness. The new system, fully worked out, would make homes permanent instead of transitory. It would check the premature sending of girls out into the world, and the tendency of young life generally to drift. It would develop industrial activities and give effective household labour. It would relieve humanity from sordid cares, yet surround it by a social life free from extravagance, pomp and display. It would create an environment calculated to temper tempestuous youth, and cause every selfish passion to subside in the presence of brotherly love. It would perfect education by co-ordinating the life of the young, and securing that the entire juvenile orbit is governed by forces of fixed congruity. It will venerate humanity by providing every comfort for old age, and garnering every precious grain of its dearly-bought experience. It will reverence humanity by careful attention to natural laws, thereby banishing unhealthy propagation, creating the birth of the fit, facilitating marriage of the affections and making early marriages possible. It would tend infancy in a wholly superior manner, and, in a word, breed, rear, train future citizens of the State of a physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual calibre such as the world has never yet seen.

A reform charged with momentous issues needs patient pre-

paration, ardent desire and the utmost skill. Evolution waits the fitness of humanity to hasten progress and elevate life by the deliberate creation of the scientifically organised unitary home with its domestic service no longer requiring the existence of a subject class.

#### DISCUSSION.

**Miss Rodwell.** — At present domestic service has no recognised status. It is the only sphere—a very wide sphere—for employment in which there is no regular training, no paid apprenticeship, and yet payment is made from the commencement.

It may here be objected that orphanages, training homes and industrial institutions do exist for girls entering domestic service, but I think it is agreed by experienced mistresses that these girls have a very great deal to learn and unlearn before they can be recognised as useful domestic servants. They are chiefly drawn from the unhappiest sections of our poorest classes—waifs and strays, girls convicted of their first offences, with low intelligence, and a moral nature which, from no fault of their own, proves an almost insurmountable barrier to good behaviour or the discipline of respectable domestic service. There is, of course, the Girl's Friendly Society, which does an immense amount of excellent work, but that institution appears rather to deal with the class of girls already started in life, and who have received their first training, than to aid the beginner, who, for want of better knowledge, often remains the drudge of a third-rate lodging-house or worse.

Domestic service as a means of support for their girls would be more popular with parents if it were acknowledged to be a regular employment under a central controlling society or training college, insisting on a definite period of apprenticeship and training; and again, if employers would agree to recognise the necessity of holidays as in other employments—shops, refreshment bars, clerkships and so on. Uncertainty as regards the future is, I fear, the lot of every servant. From the nature of things they are not able to save sufficient, as a rule, to maintain themselves in old age and sickness. They sometimes marry, some have friends who may or may not be in a position to support them, some, I am glad to think, find comfortable homes in the families where they have served for years; but for an old servant or a sick one there is absolutely no certainty but the workhouse. This is absolutely wrong. As part of the scheme which we wish to discuss for the improvement of domestic

service, could we not include some idea of rest houses—not alms-houses, meaning charity, but homes for the aged and deserving domestic servant which she has a right to enter because she has, whilst in service, contributed to the fund.

These homes of rest should be under the charge of efficient matrons—old certificated servants for choice—and these might even be combined with a training home for young servants, for there is no such efficient training as that of an old and valued servant for one of her own calling.

I do not feel this an occasion to go into details of finance and management, and rather submit for discussion the general idea of a system of proper training, with certificates to be granted, assistance in saving to old age, marriage or illness, and so finally I appeal to the leaders of the world of women's work and ask them confidently if such a scheme as I have indicated would not have their warm support, and so help to combat the difficulty of obtaining efficient domestic servants and counterpoise the attractions of those other employments, so often undesirable, which at present appeal more forcibly to the working classes.

Miss Catherine Webb, of the Association of Trained Charwomen, spoke on behalf of that class of women who had gathered round them many apt quotations. Even Shakespeare had referred to the charwoman, or rather to the subject of charring, for he had written, "When hast done this char I give thee leave to play." The modern charwoman had, however, very little "leave to play," for her life was generally a struggle for bare existence. Her Association, which was worked in connection with the Women's Industrial Council of London, aimed at providing an occupation for those women who were the breadwinners of their families, and they hoped to train up a class of charwomen who would be a credit to their Association. It would be scarcely correct to call the method they employed a practical training; but the women were put through a practical test, under a certificated teacher. The women received work only under what the Association considered fair conditions. They were paid 3s. 6d. a day without food, or 2s. 6d. a day if food was given. The Association considered that a woman could not live respectably, and possibly contribute towards the maintenance of others, under 15s. a week.

The Association began with ten women, but the number had just been increased to fifteen, and the Association had secured for them an average of 600 days work. She considered that fairly successful, as showing that the Association had to some extent met a growing demand for this class of casual day labour.



They looked forward to a better future for the charwoman, who, as a day servant, would grow into a higher class than the present charwoman.

Mrs Charlotte P. Stetson pointed out that whatever efforts might be made to bring about changes in domestic service by force, present conditions were only a necessary part of evolution, and the era must be passed through. The conditions were gradually changing. The primitive individual worked only for himself; next to him came those who worked for *themselves*—for six or ten, so to speak. Later social development tended to make all work public and to abolish all private work. People would at last realise that their work was for the common good of humanity. This rule of progress must be followed out. They could not train work backwards. Neither servant nor mistress could be forced to stay in relations which had passed away with the passing of years. They must encourage professional service, which came from outside as a matter of business. Mistresses must have a wider occupation than was now open to them. Both mistresses and servants needed the change, which would, she urged again, only come about in the gradual and irresistible course of evolution.

Miss E. A. Barnett remarked that they had heard a good deal of Utopia, and of the time when even children should sit on committees. But she wanted to tell them how some backward people in a London suburb had tried to mend their condition now and here, and how they had got on. They tried the co-operative plan in their kitchen. They thought they would get their dinner beautiful and cheap; for they had to consider the £ s. d. of the matter too. They had heard how cheap dinners were supplied in popular kitchens; but to the shame of her own class, be it said, they could never eat the sort of food supplied in these popular kitchens, and if they did eat it, they could never digest it. The result of their experiment was that they found it would cost something like £39 per person per year to keep themselves on this plan. The economy of this was not very evident. In conclusion, she advocated the transfer of girls' energies from bicycles to kitchens.

Miss Flora Stevenson said that she supposed from what she had heard that there was nobody in the hall who had ever had a faithful and loving servant, or who regretted that servants were placed below the level of their sisters who worked in a shop. Perhaps, as individuals, their efforts to alter this state of things could not effect much, but there were agencies which could

do a great deal to raise the status of domestic servants. The Y.W.C.A., for example, had branches throughout the length and breadth of the land, and she understood that in several of the branches a difference was made between the treatment of workers in shops and domestic servants. She knew of one branch where domestic servants were excluded from one part of the house; and when she asked one of the managing ladies of the institution the cause of this, she was told that dress-makers and shopwomen looked down on domestic servants. Let the Y.W.C.A., then, use its influence in raising the status of domestic servants by placing them on the same level as its other members.

Mrs Bousfield said she desired to offer two practical remarks in reference to two of the papers read. The first referred to the question why domestic service was so unpopular. One reason that she knew to be forcible lay in the fact that servants enjoyed no social advantages, which women considered to be most important. She knew that servants had their afternoons or their evenings out; but she also knew that those Sundays, which were as necessary for servants as for mistresses, were not given. If they wanted their servants to look for something higher, they must give them opportunities of taking a higher view of their calling than the mere food and the £ s. d. The present system of Sunday dinner-parties, "at homes," etc., which gave three times more work to a servant than she had on such occasions in the week, should be abandoned. Why should not the master and mistress take as much trouble in their arrangements as would ensure each servant having at least the opportunity of attending either a morning or evening service. She considered the present system was practically domestic slavery. Her second point was in reference to lady servants. Mothers and homemakers must remember that domestic training should be provided by themselves for their own daughters. Let the girls go one day to help the cook, on another let them learn to wash dishes, and be shown how these things could be done in a cleanly and proper manner. One day in the week let them wait at table. Thus would they be equipped for the vicissitudes of later life. She had had 40 years' experience in housekeeping, and had thus trained her own daughters. Her experience convinced her that both the points to which she had alluded were of primary importance.

Mrs Bunting, representing the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, said that one thing had not yet been

learnt by mistresses, and that was that servants were entitled to a reasonable amount of liberty. Mistresses had learnt how to be kind; servants had succeeded in getting better wages and better provision with regard to eating and sleeping; but one thing mistresses had not learnt, and that was that servants were not their property body and soul. Many mistresses seemed to think that a girl was absolutely theirs during all her waking hours because they paid her wages and had her in the house. Ladies came to her and begged her, almost with tears in their eyes, to procure them a good servant. But directly the question was put, "What liberty do you allow?" their tears disappeared, and they seemed to be quite oblivious of the difficulties they had experienced during the long period they had been without a servant, and absolutely refused to promise more liberty to anyone in their service. Servants wanted to feel that at certain hours, or during certain hours, they were free. A servant's work, like a mother's work, was in many cases never done. They had no moment to call their own, and that was why the great want of servants to-day was their liberty.

## CIVIL DISABILITIES OF WOMEN.

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- (A) MARRIAGE LAWS.
- (B) DIVORCE LAWS.
- (C) CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF CHILDREN.
- (D) MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY LAWS.

SMALL HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

*THURSDAY, JUNE 29, MORNING.*

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MRS BAMFORD SLACK in the Chair.

**Mrs Bamford Slack**, in opening the proceedings, said they all had one common wish and one sole aim—that being to ameliorate the condition of life for those who suffered from inequalities and disabilities. There was great need to do something practical on their own initiative for the good of the womanhood of the whole world. The future was most promising; but they must not stay their hand until they had succeeded in securing the parliamentary vote, and thus become possessed of the right to protect their own interests.

## On the Legal Condition of Women in Belgium.

**Mlle. Maria Popelin, LL.D. (Belgium).**

IN this question of the legal condition of women, one must distinguish between the unmarried and the married woman.

The woman who is of age and single is legally the equal of the adult man ; she may freely dispose of her person and her possessions, leave her family, marry, inherit property, buy, sell, alienate, mortgage, go to law, etc., etc. The laws of the Revolution have, we admit, suppressed the privileges of the older laws with regard to masculine rights and primogeniture, and the Code of 1804 has confirmed the principle of the equality of the sexes before the law, and also of all the children in each family, regardless of age.

In spite of this, the legal equality of even the single woman is not complete. Her competence, though acknowledged in the main, is somewhat hampered in its exercise. Some consider these limitations the result of the legislator's inadvertence ; but it is rather the outcome of a deep-rooted prejudice which he has never parted with.

Whatever the cause, the fact remains that even an unmarried woman may neither testify to a witness's identity nor bear testimony to the truth of a declaration ; she can neither have a certificate of birth or marriage drawn up, nor be either a guardian or a member of what we abroad understand by a *conseil de famille*.

As you see, the old idea of woman's inferiority and incompetence—I had almost said imbecility—is maintained in disdain of all contrary assertions ; it exists in our law, and has not disappeared from our social life. To-day, still, woman has not the place of honour at the banquet of intelligence ; or rather, she has not that equal share for which we plead. She is repulsed from public employment, scantily protected against seduction, and it is the so-called weaker vessel who is loaded with all the disgrace and burden of children born out of wedlock.

With us the mother may be sought out (and rightly enough), but the so-called inquiry into the paternity is forbidden, in consequence of which the father may escape all disastrous results of his improper courses and lying promises.

When one turns to the married woman's lot, it is still more disadvantageous.

In the home only the husband's supremacy and the woman's complete subordination are recognised. The husband is the head of the family and of the community ; he is, in the terms of the Middle Ages, the lord and master of his wife, the "*vir caput umberis*" of canonical law. The woman who marries loses her liberty and independence ; she loses her name and her nationality, to take that of her husband ; she has no other legal habitation but his, and must follow her husband wherever he is pleased to

reside—here I quote from a great authority—“even to a place where the plague is raging.”

Though the latter clause is not often enforced, it would be a mistake to suppose all the stipulations are in disuse. The woman who wishes to shirk her duty and leave the conjugal abode can be brought back “*manu militare*,” says the law. Furthermore, she alone is supposed to be true to her oath of fidelity, though that is not expected of her husband.

The *father* also enjoys a monopoly of parental authority, and has sole possession of his children's property during their minority.

Before the law the married woman's incapacity is complete. Under whatever matrimonial *régime* she may have entered the ranks, she may neither go to law, give, alienate property, mortgage, without being authorised thereto by her husband or a court of justice; and under the *régime* whereby everything is held in common, which is the legal one, and the one that is generally adopted by the working classes, the woman who, of course, marries without a settlement is stripped of everything. Her income, her savings, her wages, and even her furniture belong to her husband, who can dispose of them as he likes. All this is by way of promoting a good understanding in the home!

These feelings of distrust towards woman, which seem the legacy of a barbaric past, are still lively in the mind of the Belgian legislator. I am ashamed to confess that we are still awaiting a clause in the code authorising the married woman to make deposits to the Savings Bank, and to withdraw these deposits without her husband's permission.

All the stir made throughout Belgium by the League in aid of women's rights, and the extensively-signed petition sent in to the Parliament, have so far—and we have been exerting ourselves for nearly 10 years—brought no result.

Widowhood alone restores to the married woman both her liberty and her competence in matters of management. Even then, her husband's last wishes may restrict the mother's full rights over her children, by appointing a special trustee, without whose sanction the mother is unable to act.

Thus we see that during the husband's lifetime the law does not recognise the woman's claim to free will, intelligence or aptitude for business. After his death this is all changed by magic, and the wife enters into possession of her intellectual and moral wealth to the same extent as man, apparently—the law giving her her place at the head of the family.

Inconsistency of the law! The Roman code was more logical;

it made the woman a minor during her husband's lifetime, and at his death placed her under the guardianship of her son.

## The Marriage Law of England.

Mrs Wolstenholme Elmy (Great Britain).

I WELL remember that, early in the year 1867, when a few of us were contemplating Parliamentary action for the amendment of the law relating to the property of married women, I received from Mr John Stuart Mill (who had given his name to our General Committee) an important communication, urging the propriety of beginning our efforts by seeking the overthrow of the sex-dominion of the husband in marriage. For various reasons this seemed impracticable at the time, chiefly, as I recollect, because it was felt that the time was fully ripe for the lesser reform, whilst men and women alike then needed educating and preparing for the vital change indicated by Mr Mill. If to-day I urge the consideration by women of this evil, it is because I hold that the conditions of to-day have made this far-reaching reform both necessary and possible as the next great step in the evolutionary progress of the race.

Two years later, in his book, *The Subjection of Women*, Mr Mill, speaking of the sex slavery of the English wife, declared:—

"However brutal a tyrant she may unfortunately be chained to—though she may know that he hates her, though it may be his daily pleasure to torture her, and though she may feel it impossible not to loathe him, he can claim from her and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being—that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations."

Some of us thought at the time that this was an over-statement of the case, and lawyers of eminence, notably the late Mr Justice Stephen, in his *Digest of the Criminal Law*, have questioned the legal validity of this doctrine.

The doctrine, as stated in the words of Judge Hale himself, upon whose solitary dictum alone it rests, is this:<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Judge Hale's dictum, referred to by Mr Justice Stephen, is one of the numerous *obiter dicta* of sex-biassed judges, from the consequences of which women have suffered so cruelly. The case under his consideration was that of a husband who had used violence towards his wife in order to assist another person to commit a rape upon her. This was adjudged a felonious act. The dictum of Judge Hale was therefore quite beside the matter under consideration, and, according to Mr Justice Stephen in his *Digest of the Criminal Law*, "he gives no authority for it."

"The husband cannot be guilty of a rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by *their mutual matrimonial consent and contract* the wife hath given herself up in this kind unto her husband, which she *cannot retract*."

Sir James Stephen's comment upon this is:—

"Hale's reason is that the wife's consent at marriage is irrevocable. Surely, however, the consent is confined to the decent and proper use of marital rights. If a man used violence to his wife under circumstances in which decency or her own health or safety required or justified her in refusing her consent, I think he might be convicted of rape, notwithstanding Lord Hale's dictum."

So doubtful in fact did it seem that this was the law of England that the eminent judges, whose labours resulted in the Criminal Code Bill, 1878, proposed to make it law by Section 165 of that measure, which defined rape as the "act of a man, not under the age of fourteen years, having carnal knowledge of a woman, *who is not his wife, without her consent*"; providing further "That a husband cannot commit rape upon his wife by carnally knowing her himself." The Criminal Code Bill did not become law. Unhappily we can no longer doubt that the marriage law of England in this regard is to-day as unjust, cruel and infamous as was indicated by Mr Mill.

This has been brought about, not by statutory enactment, well-considered or otherwise, but by the *declaration of the judges*, made in the case *Regina v. Clarence*. The prisoner Clarence was charged, in one count, with unlawfully and maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm upon his wife, Selina Clarence; and, in another count, with assaulting her, occasioning actual bodily harm. The evidence showed that the prisoner was aware of his suffering at the time from disease, and that she was not aware of it. The jury found the prisoner guilty on both counts. For the prisoner it was urged that the conviction was contrary to the authorities, whilst for the prosecution other authorities were cited on the other side. It was finally held by the majority of the judges that the conviction under either section could not be supported. The conviction was therefore quashed. Those who wish to understand in its full degradation the actual character of the law of England at the present time respecting the relation of marriage ought to study this case with the greatest care.<sup>1</sup> Its bearing, however, upon the marriage relation is not to be measured by the actual decision, but by the statements of the

<sup>1</sup> A full report is to be found in *The Justice of the Peace*, March 9, 1899.



several judges, in which *all of them implicitly concurred*, as to the legal position of a husband in relation to a wife.

Mr Justice Smith affirms:—

“At marriage the wife consents to the husband’s exercising the marital right. The consent then given is not confined to a husband when sane in body, for I suppose no one would assert that a husband was guilty of an offence because he exercised such right when afflicted with some complaint of which he was then ignorant. Until the consent given at marriage be revoked, how can it be said that the husband, in exercising his marital right, has assaulted the wife?”

Mr Justice Stephen, at the end of a very lengthy argument, declares:—

“I wish to observe, on a matter personal to myself, that I was quoted as having said, in my *Digest of the Criminal Law*, that I thought a husband might, under certain circumstances, be indicted for rape on his wife. I did say so in the first edition, but, on referring to the last edition, p. 124 (note), it will be found that that statement was withdrawn.”

Such then is the existing marriage law of England—modified only by the fact that, since the passing of the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1884, the wife who refuses to obey a decree for the restitution of conjugal rights will not be imprisoned by any Court, nor, since the decision in the *Clitheroe* case, 1891, will the husband be permitted to seize and restrain of her liberty a wife who refuses to live with him. But so long as a wife continues to live under the roof of her husband this law takes effect in all its brutality.

I denounce this infamy in the name of the wife, the mother, the child, the race, and the higher humanity to which we aspire.

The wife. Can any other slavery equal this slavery? The female slave, who refused to submit to outrage at the hands of her master would, at least in any Christian country, be held justified. Even the poor outcasts of our streets, much as they suffer at the hands of a false and cruel civilisation, are protected by law from such an outrage. I affirm, with Mr Mill, that “The time will come when it will be recognised that of all the superstitions that ever existed, the most barbarous was the idea that one individual could, under any circumstances, have a *right* to the person of another.” Yet this “most barbarous superstition” is actually embodied in and promulgated by the marriage law of England at this hour. And so long as this remains the case the *legal* position of the English wife living with her husband is

that of the most degraded slavery. That no humane or decent man could be capable of enforcing his legal rights is no excuse whatever for the continuance of our unjust and most immoral law; rather should the law at once be brought up to the level of the practice of men possessed of heart and conscience. For many men are still base enough, inhuman enough, to use to the utmost the iniquitous prerogative conferred upon them. Only those who are constantly called to help and advise suffering wives can know what unspeakable infamies are sometimes hidden by the veil of legal marriage.

An enforced maternity is a crime against the mother. She who bears the burden of maternity should be a free, purposeful, loving mother, and not the abject slave of the lowest appetites of the mere animal man.

A coerced maternity is a crime against the child, whose first right it is to be "well-born," and no child born of compelled motherhood can be well-born. The offspring of uncontrolled and selfish lust on the one side, and abject subservience on the other, is ill-born, no matter upon what external prosperity it may be ushered.

It is a crime against the race. In both England and America public attention has at last been directed to the vast array of defective and undeveloped children. Of America, Mrs Gardener says:—

"We begin to wonder that man has been so slow in learning to read the message that Nature has telegraphed to him in letters of fire, and photographed with a terrible persistency upon the distorted, diseased bodies and minds of his children, and upon the moral imbeciles she has set before him as an answer to his message of sex domination. Do you know that there is an army of 700,000 defectives in this country? Don't you know that this means something to every mother in the world? Seven hundred thousand forced into life without their birthright! Seven hundred thousand imbecile, insane, deaf, dumb, blind and criminal victims of maternal and paternal ignorance! Stop and think of it."

It is a crime against the higher humanity, since, as Mrs Gardener most justly says,—

"Subject mothers never did, and subject mothers never will, produce a race of free, well-poised, liberty-loving, justice-practising children. Maternity is an awful power. It blindly strikes back at injustice with a force that is a fearful menace to mankind. And the race which is born of mothers who are harassed, bullied, subordinated, or made the victims of blind passion or power, or

of mothers who are simply too petty and self-debased to feel their subject status, cannot fail to continue to give the horrible spectacles we have always had of war, of crime, of vice, of trickery, of double-dealing, of pretence, of lying, of arrogance, of subserviency, of incompetence, of brutality, and, alas! of insanity, idiocy, and disease added to a fearful and unnecessary mortality."

To women—educated, thoughtful, purposeful women—I appeal to put an end to this crime by putting an end to sex dominion and to sex slavery.

## The Legal Position of Married Women in Russia.

**Mme. Maria Boubnoff (Russia).**

BEFORE I speak about married women's position in Russia, I must mention the fact that our population, which counts more than 120,000,000 inhabitants, is formed of a great number of nationalities, which profess various creeds, a certain amount of religious toleration being recognised in Russia. The first place in extension and number belongs, of course, to Christianity in its numerous varieties, inclusive of the different sects. Then follow the Jewish and Mahometan creeds. When I speak about marriage laws I consider only the orthodox Russian woman and not those who belong to other religions and are not subject to all our marriage laws. For instance, monogamy is adopted by the whole of Russia, with the exception of the Russian Mahometan subjects. Only two obligatory conditions are required for all Russian subjects without distinction of creed; firstly, both parties must have attained a certain age; and secondly, mutual consent of the betrothed.

The subordination of our marriage to clerical jurisdiction in olden times, and its actual religious character, constitute especially nowadays the difference between our marriage and that of the West, where marriage has a civil character and does not always require, in order to be considered legal, the religious ceremony. Thus, in Russia, the consummation and dissolution of marriage belongs to clerical jurisdiction, but from the moment of their union the respective judicial relations between husband and wife are regulated by the general legislation.

The strong influence of the Byzantine Church Law and the

early relations with the East, where women were still in an abject and inferior position, shaped the ancient Russian family life, and created for the Russian wife miserable conditions, against which she fought through many centuries, nor was it an easy task to overcome them.

In spite of the actual favourable changes, the influence of that formerly dependent position of the Russian wife is to be remarked even nowadays; its traces are visible not only in the ceremonies and customs, but they are deeply rooted in the consciousness of the hundred millions of the Russian population. The Greek *Nomocanon* was a collection of Church rules and State edicts, published by Greek patriarchs and emperors. Dating from the beginning of the eleventh century, the section of this book treating of marriage formed the basis of the laws on this subject. These required from the wife the most absolute and slavish submission to the will of the husband. I mention this book, the Greek *Nomocanon*, because its views on women, which characterise that distant epoch, imbued so deeply the minds not only of men, but of women too, that the uneducated part of our numerous population, to which belongs the peasantry and the less intellectual of the educated, have still a quite peculiar idea of the wife, which finds its whole expression in the canonical sentence, "Let the wife fear her husband."

In spite of our newer laws favourably conceived for women, and which are yearly added to by the decrees of our Senate in order to secure for the married woman a certain moral independence, and protect her from the caprice of her husband, we see scores of millions of peasant marriages regulated by the old Customary Law, which varies with the economic circumstances of each place. This law takes evidently its origin from that remote time, so unfavourable to women, when right was synonymous with force, and did not protect them from all kinds of disabilities. We can suppose, therefore, that this Customary Law, so widely spread in Russia, does not exist for the welfare of woman. The State allows her to appeal to the newer laws; there are many such examples, but we suppose that those examples are exceptions, and that the average woman is satisfied, or rather submits to forms sanctified by centuries. All I have said, characterised the married woman's position till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when our great reformer, Peter I., in 1724, published the edict which forbade parents and lords to constrain children and dependent people to marry against their will. That edict officially granted to girls the right to dispose of their destiny

and if marriage remained still a servitude, the girl was free, at least, to choose her future master—the husband.

The numerous reforms which characterise that epoch of Russian history touched also the married woman's position. Peter the Great delivered the wife from her home-prison, he associated her in public life, and revealed to her a new, quite unknown, world. That moral and physical enfranchisement of the Russian woman, besides the good influence it produced on the rude customs of that time, was most useful to herself; it awakened a consciousness of her lowliness, and induced her to imitate her more civilised sister of the West. Unfortunately those reforms, intended to change the intimate Russian family life, were made so unexpectedly and so imperiously that they touched only superficially the social life, whilst the Russian household, with its deeply-rooted prejudices, bore for a long time, bears even nowadays, the traces of slavery and unrighteousness.

The Russian woman's married position was further improved under the reign of Catherine the Great, who did a good deal for women's education in Russia.

It is certain that the Russian woman's struggle with the past oppression was so successful that it gave her the possibility of obtaining rights, for the sake of which the women of the most civilised countries of Europe are fighting even nowadays. In the reign of Nicholas I., in the first half of this century, when the codification of the present Russian law was begun, the married woman's condition was, in fact, so improved that the laws concerning the respective position of wife and husband established for both equal rights in the matter of property. Now, there is no reason to complain about civil disabilities of married women. As to property laws, the marriage remains essentially a religious institution, a sacrament, but requires from both consorts the same responsibilities and the same duties. I can say, even, that the marriage reserves to the Russian woman certain advantages. The husband is obliged to support his wife, and our Courts treat this question very favourably for women, even after separation of husband and wife. Russian law does not admit "Civil Marriage," and makes only exception for sectarians, who do not believe in the necessity of clerical intervention.

The marriage age begins in Russia for men at 18, and for girls at 16. Exception to this rule is made for the Caucasus, where the requisite age is lowered only for natives to 15 for men and 13 for girls. Our law regulations determine also the limit of age allowed for marriage, which is 80 years.

Besides those two conditions, namely, age and mutual consent of bride and bridegroom, the permission of parents or guardians is also necessary till the attainment of civil majority, which begins in Russia at 21 years. Russian officers are forbidden to marry before 23 years, and between that and 28 they can marry, with permission from their respective authorities, and after having produced evidence of certain pecuniary conditions, whether on the part of the bridegroom or of the bride.

The members of the Diplomatic Corps are also obliged to ask permission to marry of their authorities.

Marriage is forbidden between all degrees of kindred in ascendant and descendent lines, and in lateral lines, inclusive to the fourth degree of kindred. Marriage is forbidden with lunatics and non-Christians, to marry for the fourth time, or to marry again when the former marriage is not duly divorced.

Legal marriage, as well as betrothal, for orthodox people must be celebrated in the church in presence of two or three witnesses, and according to the ritual of the Orthodox Church. Each marriage is registered in the parish book, which is the chief written proof of the marriage. In marriages between orthodox persons and those of other religions the children issuing from such mixed unions must be baptised in the orthodox creed. A mixed marriage must be celebrated in the Russian Orthodox Church, otherwise it is considered irregular.

I have exposed briefly and superficially the history of the position of Russian married women. I have tried to point out the abyss which lies now between the near past and the actual present—this favourable present—which allows the Russian woman to become really and spiritually an equal and independent element of marriage. The Russian wife can, in her aspirations towards welfare, boldly join her interests with those of her husband, who appears now her ally in the best meaning of the word.

## The Divorce Laws of New South Wales.

**Mrs D. E. Armitage (New South Wales).**

IN a short paper like the present, we can merely take a cursory glance at the principal Act of New South Wales, which is called "An Act to confer Jurisdiction on the Supreme Court in Divorce

and Matrimonial Causes," and which came into operation on 1st July 1873. It consists of 49 sections, and is very much on the lines of the present English Act. Power is given to the "Court," meaning the Chief Justice or one of the Puisne judges, to deal with these cases, and as to costs, alimony and guardianship of children. By Section 15 either side could obtain a judicial separation for adultery, cruelty or desertion; and Section 22 gives the different causes for which a husband or wife can obtain a divorce.

On 21st July 1875 an Act was passed to declare valid the marriage of a man with the sister of his deceased wife. I believe this is the same in all the Australian colonies, as well as New Zealand, and in this respect differs from the English law.

In 1877 an amendment seems to have been brought forward, which in the preamble says, "Whereas it is expedient to amend the law relating to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes, and to confer the same rights and privileges in the matter of divorce on women as are now held and enjoyed by men," etc. But this did not become law until 1881, and is to a certain extent limited by the necessity for proof of the husband's domicile within the colony.

On 28th November 1878 an amendment was passed allowing appeals on the subject of costs, and repealing the 41st Section of the Principal Act.

On 3d July 1884 another amendment was passed, which relates to juries, collusion, costs, etc.

In September 1886 a further amendment became law, relating to procedure, etc., and warned parties against re-marrying after a decree *nisi* only, in ignorance that it requires to be made absolute; and Section 2 of this Act was passed to validate such re-marriages in which the time limited by the decree *nisi* had been allowed to expire and there had been no intervention.

In July 1887 an amendment was brought forward, but this did not come into force until August 1892, the preamble reading, "Whereas it is desirable to extend the provisions of the law of divorce, and also in certain particulars to amend the existing law." The new sections were materially based on the Amendment of 1887, and read, "Any married person who, at the time of the institution of the suit, shall have been domiciled in the colony for 3 years and upwards (provided that he or she shall not have resorted to the colony for the purpose of such institution) may present a petition to the Supreme Court praying that his or her marriage may be dissolved, or that a judicial separation

may be granted on the following grounds :—(a) For desertion on either side for 3 years and upwards, and this clause provides that no wife who was domiciled in New South Wales when the desertion commenced shall lose her domicile by reason only of her husband having thereafter acquired a foreign domicile. (b) On the ground that either party has been for 3 years or upwards an habitual drunkard or guilty of cruelty as regards the husband towards the wife, or, being a wife, has been for 3 years or upwards an habitual drunkard, or neglected her domestic duties, or rendered herself unfit to discharge them. (c) That the respondent has been imprisoned for a period of not less than 3 years, and is still in prison under a commuted sentence for a capital crime, or under sentence for 7 years or upwards, or, being a husband, has, within 5 years, undergone frequent convictions for crime, and been sentenced to imprisonment for 3 years and upwards, and left his wife habitually without the means of support. (d) That within 1 year previously the respondent has been convicted of having attempted to murder the petitioner, or of having assaulted him or her with intent to inflict bodily harm, or on the ground that the respondent has repeatedly during that period assaulted and cruelly beaten the petitioner."

The difficulties of proving domicile are to a great extent lessened in the Amendment of 1892, as the Court presumes that the petitioner is domiciled in New South Wales, and he or she is not put to the proof of it unless the domicile is denied or the facts tend to rebut that presumption, but under the other Acts and Amendments domicile has to be proved. A wife in Shanghai presented a petition for divorce, and it was held that the domicile of the wife being that which the husband had selected for himself, she could sue in the New South Wales Court, where he was resident at the time of the petition, though she was not; but if the husband (where respondent) has never been domiciled in New South Wales, the Court cannot entertain a petition by the wife even under Section 1 (a) of the Amendment Act of 1892. There are 7 sections in this Amendment; the 4th provides that the Court may make an order forbidding the publication of evidence, though a case cannot be heard *in camera*, and the 6th Section provides that the Court shall have power to make orders in respect of the wife's property, or of alimony to her. This Act is cited as the "Divorce Amendment and Extension Act of 1892," and is the one under which the majority of petitioners in New South Wales are heard.

The last Amendment of June 1893 deals with minor matters



relating to time for recovery of damages, fraudulent deeds, wife being given custody of children in undefended cases, and as to husband and wife being admissible witnesses, power to refer to the Court in Banco, etc., etc.

The above, so far as I am able to condense it, is the law of New South Wales, and a large number of petitions praying for divorce have been granted to women. This was particularly the case when the Amendment of 1892 first came into operation. I understand that in proportion to our population, which numbers something like 1,323,460, we have as large a number of divorces as in any other country.

May I hope that I am not here on false pretences to-day, for though my sub-section is entitled "Civil Disabilities of Women," you may observe that so far I have not been able to bring under your notice any civil disabilities under which women are placed in New South Wales. The law recognises an equal moral standard for men and women, and this is only right, but whether the ease with which a divorce can be obtained adds to the happiness of the community is a very open question. One of our judges a few months ago said that most cases brought before him were by young couples who had rushed into matrimony before they understood the importance of the step, and in a short time came to the Court to be released. He deplored the fact that parents had not more influence over their children in preventing this. In England, I understand young people fly to the Court for a separation order upon the slightest provocation, and if one may be so venturesome as to draw a moral from this, it is that we, who are mothers and fathers of families, cannot too strongly impress upon the young people what an important step marriage is. We talk about our "advanced education" nowadays, but where is the school to teach girls to be good wives, and boys to be good husbands? In choosing a dwelling-place, do we not consider its suitability from all points of view, why not then the merits of the partner with whom we have to dwell? The difference between a well-thought-of and happy marriage and a hasty and mistaken one is so great that I need not even draw attention to it, except as the most beautiful phase of life and the acme of misery. If all the marriages were happy, this smiling world would be a perfect Utopia. May it be our women's mission to help to make it so.

For much of the information above given I am indebted to Mr Whitfield's book on *The Practice in Divorce*, which he kindly placed at my disposal, and to the Government Printing Office of

New South Wales, where I was supplied with copies of the Act and Amendments.

## Divorce Laws in France.

**Mme. Oddo Deffou (France).**

WHEN the Catholics in France raised their voices against the revival of divorce in the name of religion, they confounded, I think, the obligation to do with the possibility of doing. Though divorce, established by the Napoleonic Code, abolished by the law of the 8th of May 1816, was re-established by the law of the 27th of July 1884, every man and every woman is still at liberty to suffer the deepest injuries and the worst treatment without having recourse to it. As to the one who is obliged to submit to it, his or her conscience cannot be responsible for a fact which the will has not sanctioned. Note further, that the person against whom divorce is pronounced must have, at least, some part of the fault on his or her side.

The only reasons that would be possible to allege against divorce are religious. From a philosophical point of view, it is as barbarous as insane to rivet with one chain two beings who are an ever-living torture to each other. As for the children, and the influences to which their age renders them so impressionable, it does not seem to us that the sight given to their young imagination by the secret or open struggles of the husband and wife, always at variance, will be more propitious to their moral education than this of the parents' definitive separation.

M. Noquet, author of the recent law, wanted it to consecrate the principle of moral equality for both sexes, the most important. He desired the causes for divorce to be exactly the same for the man as for the woman.

One of our best-known classical authors, M. Baudry Lacantinerie, has dared to make a long dissertation against the principle that M. Noquet has stated and made to triumph. A whole page of his book is intended to prove that the man's adultery is much more excusable than the woman's, that it leaves in the woman's heart a much less deep wound than the woman's adultery leaves in his. What does he know about it? As for me, his judgment is exactly the reverse of truth.

This author thinks more rightly that the equality affixed to

the causes of divorce ought to be extended to the punishment of adultery. We quite agree with that idea, or rather we think that the revival of divorce ought to involve the suppression of all punishments of that kind. These odious laws have already been repealed by which a husband was the absolute master of the fate of his guilty (or seemingly guilty) wife, and might have her put in prison, exactly as they put a thief or a forger, for a period that could extend to two years.

Nevertheless, our legislation would not be French, I may say more, would not be the legislation of a civilised country, if it was not stamped with the marks of the deep contempt that all the nations of Europe felt it their duty to show towards the daughters of Eve. She, when she left Paradise, possibly had difficulty in finding a stone where to rest her head. We, if we have the misfortune to be driven away by circumstances from that married state, which our young imaginations represent to us as a paradise, and which is too often a hell, we have to rest our head only on that stone that is given us by the magistrate; however hard or angular it is, we have no right to change it without his leave. I mean to say that, during the divorce proceedings, while the husband remains free to fix his abode where he likes, the wife is obliged to live precisely in the place the judge has chosen for her. A severe penalty follows her disobedience; the law says the husband is, in this case, authorised to deny her alimony, and that, if she is the plaintiff, he may have her declared incapable of going on with the proceedings.

Such is, on the whole, the legal and official aspect of the question of divorce in France. The woman's inferior position does not appear there as clearly as in the laws referring to marriage; as soon as she tries to break her chain, they give her back a small part of her former liberty. But if, from that legal point of view, which is only the superficial point of view, we enter into the heart of things, what a difference we find in the position of the two parties. To whom must the woman apply who wishes a divorce? To men. To whom must she entrust the most delicate, the saddest particulars of her private life? To men. By whom is she going to be sentenced? By men. I think that real equity is impossible under such circumstances. Let us put aside the perplexity, the humiliation that a woman may feel when obliged to trust her secrets to men; even let us suppose that, from the moment she made up her mind to be divorced, she made up her mind to bear everything. But these men, from the very fact that they are men, will not even under-

stand her. If there are such unfathomable depths between masculine intellect and feminine intellect, how much more between masculine feelings and feminine feelings. There will be true justice in these affairs only when they are settled by judges of both sexes. And, in general, I believe that every lawsuit where men and women are involved ought to be settled by a tribunal composed half of men, half of women.

If now we wished to examine the moral and philosophical reasons on which people are grounded either to attack or to defend divorce, we might begin a most interesting study. On the whole, these ideas may be summed up in two questions—In what measure must the interest of the individuals, who want to break the matrimonial chain, be preferred to public interest, which wants this bond to be maintained? How, too, is the children's interest to be conciliated with the parents' interest? As to children, I have already said that the general opinion, that considers the parents' divorce as the worst thing for them, does not seem correct to me. Now, is the Government right when it uses all the influence in its power in order to prevent divorces? To be sure they do it with a view to public order, but there are two kinds of order, apparent order and real order. To preserve bad marriages is to maintain only apparent order. The real disorder is in the bad marriages themselves. But if we compare bad marriages to an illness (and they are socially the worst kind of plague), divorce is only the crisis that declares it and may bring it to an issue. But if we wish to employ efficacious remedies, it is not the sign we must attack, but the thing it signifies; it is not divorce we must destroy, we must destroy bad marriages. Let us establish what I shall willingly call the prophylaxy of divorce. The true means of succeeding is to raise the moral level of mankind, to bring it to a higher standard, to give the man a clearer knowledge of his duties, in short, to put into practice what has been already shown in theory, one moral rule for both sexes.

## Custody and Guardianship of Children.

**Fräulein Anita Augsburg, Dr Jur. (Germany).**

THE civil legislation of Germany is just on the point of undergoing a great change. Till now we had not only special laws in every country of our empire, but even in every country

local laws in the various districts or towns, especially concerning that part of the law which interests us women most of all, "family law." A civil Code is now settled for the whole empire, in order to unify all legal relations. Our new and universal civil law is going to be practised from January of the year 1900, and of course contains some important progress in the position of women for which German women struggled hard, and though we did not in every point obtain what we wanted, we had a considerable success, especially respecting guardianship of children, as well as of grown-up people of mental or moral infirmity, so that I am proud to declare, when asked about civil disabilities of women as to guardianship: "*We have none in Germany!*"

German women are capable of taking the guardianship of any child, and it can be conferred on them by will of a parent, or by nomination of the Court; their sex is no objection to their being made guardian, only it allows them to decline this generally obligatory civil honorary function. Till now the state of fact was in Germany, that in many districts not even mothers could become guardians of their own children after their husband's death: some other man had to take the legal responsibility for the education of the orphans. In other districts mothers and grandmothers might become guardians for their own children and grandchildren, but never was the responsible education of minors trusted to women beyond their family. From the beginning of next century mothers in Germany no longer become *guardians* of their orphan children, but are simply bearers of the parental power in the same way as the fathers were when they lived, without any control or restriction by guardians. With respect to other people's children, however, as I just indicated, women in our country, as soon as they come of age themselves, are able to become guardians, if the conferring magistrate thinks them fit for the position. This lays on them considerable responsibility, however, for the laws on guardianship and custody are very severe, fortunately, to secure the interests of a ward. The sole restriction that can be laid on a woman's taking a guardianship arises from the authority of her husband. If she is a married wife, her husband cannot only forbid her to accept, but his consent must even be asked for before she is nominated. This prescription, as you see, however, does not proceed from any suggested disability of the sex, but from the intention to put the whole self of the wife into the service of matrimony, which is to be entirely to the profit of the man.

The power of guardianship of women, according to our wishes,

must even be carried on to a higher degree in Germany. We have got a controlling magistracy over the guardians, that has to watch over their managing well the duties implied to them, that has to find out the persons best fit for the function of a guardian, and propose them to the judge in each case, and that has to denunciate every neglect of the care for or abuse of the power over children and minors on behalf of parents as well as guardians. This board, called "Local Orphan's Council," which is likewise an honorary institution of local government, is of greatest importance with respect to social progress. For it is the misfortune of the spoiled education of orphans and fatherless children that they often fill up the ranks of crime and prostitution. What enormous good would result if co-operative work of women could be brought into action on this domain in favour of the universal improvement of education. What immeasurable amount of talents and good qualities could be developed to useful and thriving life for the benefit of the whole nation, instead of being smothered or turned into the wrong way by want of care, or misguiding. Our male trustees, I am sorry to say, and I guess it is pretty much the same in all countries, have not been very successful in the tasks imposed on them with the care for the education of a great part of the people. I am sure that, on one hand, the circumstance that their time and their thoughts are generally too much taken up by their own affairs, and, on the other hand, their not being so particularly accustomed and qualified for the duties of education as women are supposed to be by nature, are the cause of this failure, so injurious to the general welfare. But I think this *fact* must make us the more eager to aspire to a possible change in this by getting the work of women into the superintendence of guardianship. If we have not a better disposition for the task suggested to us than men have, at least we have in most cases the more time to consecrate to it; and as everywhere till now, in any field of labour where woman's help has been made proof of, it has highly recommended itself by its results, let us hope that it will be the same with this trial, and that, even if we fail in the endeavour to attain the legal qualification for the superintendence of guardians at once, we may come to this controlling office step by step.

## Custody and Guardianship of Children according to Danish Law.

Herr Svend Hogsbro (Denmark).

FROM its birth the child is subject to the guardianship of its parents; they have the duty to take care of its nursing, subsistence, education and instruction, and the corresponding power and claim of obedience. If the child is *legitimate*, the *duty* is incumbent on both parents, but the *power* is—if they disagree with each other—with the father. He has the right to settle how the child is to be educated, instructed, on the whole, treated; whether it has to be at home or abroad, etc.—all without reference to the will of the mother. There are but one or two exceptions—(a) If the parents belong to different religions, they, before the wedding ceremony, have to declare in which religion their children shall be brought up, and if they belong to the same religion, it is supposed they will have the children brought up in that religion. This determination can only be altered with consent of *both* parents, or, if one of them is deceased, of the church and school department. A law of 1824 settles that a minor (*i.e.*, generally under 25) must for its marriage have consent from its parents or others concerned. In *theory* some interpreters understand these words thus: That the consent of both parents is necessary, or at least thus: That if the one enters a protest the marriage cannot be. *Practically* only the father's consent is claimed. Whether the mother is able to prevent marriage by entering a protest has, as far as I know, never been tried.

If the child is illegitimate, the duties as well as the rights and powers are with the mother, but the father is obliged to share with her the cost concerning its subsistence, not less than the half, according to a resolution of the magistrates, and specially strong remedies are given to force him to pay. If he cannot, she gets the money out of the public expenses as a parish relief to him.

The parental duties and powers leave off at the age of 15.

As to the administration of the *fortune* of a child, our rules are as follows:—Capital exceeding 200 crowns (£11) is to be managed by a special public office, which pays the interest to the guardian. Real properties and the like are managed by the

guardian, but under the superintendence of the judicial authorities. For all means under the management of a guardian he has to render a yearly account. When the child has attained the age of 18 the public superintendence as well as the usual guardianship leaves off, and all its fortune is delivered to itself to be managed by the minor in conjunction with a curator until the age of 25. Then the full and free self-government commences. (Men over 21 can by royal license get it before, but women not.)

If one of the parents *dies* before the child has attained the age of 18, the surviving one has the duties and the rights with regard to it. However, the father of an illegitimate child cannot, after its mother's death, alter her determinations as to how or by whom the child shall be brought up.

If the *marriage* between the parents is *dissolved in their lifetime*, the question with whom the child shall go will depend upon whether the divorce is based on judgment or on royal license. In the *first case*, the children will, as a rule, be shared equally between the parents, without reference to the cause why the dissolution has come. If the number of the children be unequal, the remaining one, if a daughter, will be given to the mother; if a son, to the father. Children under 7 years will remain temporarily with the mother. These are the rules usually adopted in practice. In the written law there are no fixed rules on these matters. However, in practice the following exception is acknowledged—that if the divorce is due to the guilt of the one consort against the other (*i.e.*, adultery, bigamy, desertion), the innocent party has the right to keep all their children; and notwithstanding this, the other is obliged to pay a proper share—settled by the magistrates—for their subsistence. In case of divorce by *royal license* this will not be granted until—either by mutual consent between both parties, or by resolution of the minister of justice—it has been settled how the children are to be shared between the parents. The minister will in this respect usually follow the above-mentioned rules. Should some of the children come on the parish, each of the parents is obliged to compensate its outlay without reference to which of them has the child. That parent, however, to whom the child has not been given has no right to it as long as the other parent lives and the magistrates do not on account of some abuse deprive him or her of the right. If one of these two cases happens, the right of the other parent again comes into force.

If the divorced or surviving consort *marries again*, the step-father or stepmother will, as far as the child is brought up in the



common home, or claims are advanced to his (or her) means, have the usual paternal control over it. On the other hand, the stepfather gets (according to a law of 1891) just the same duty of supporting the child as if it were his own legitimate child. The stepmother, on the contrary, has this duty only towards her husband's legitimate children, and it leaves off in case of her divorce with him.

If a child has *neither parents nor step-parents*, its next kinsman, first on the father's side, then on the mother's, is obliged to be its guardian, and as such take care of its fortune. But he is not obliged to make any outlay from his own purse. If the child has no means, or insufficient means, the parish will have to support it. It usually will put it to nurse with *foster parents*. Over children put at nurse, whether by the public, their own parents, guardians, or anybody else, the magistrates will arrange a special superintendence until they have attained the age of 14 years. It is in each municipality exercised through men or women, fit for that purpose, whom the corporate body can prevail on. This charge is unpaid, and is one of the very few public charges with which women can be vested.

If the child has no *kinsman at all* who can enter upon the guardianship—every guardian must be a man in the country, at least 25 years old, honest and solvent—the magistrates will, if necessary, appoint a man for that purpose, and then it is his duty—usually without any salary at all—to enter upon the charge.

By royal license a man or woman can adopt a child, and the relation between them will then be nearly the same as between a parent and his legitimate child. It can be dissolved by a new royal license.

Mrs Hugh Dixon (New South Wales) was prepared with a paper in continuation of this subject, but it was ruled by the meeting to properly belong to another section, and Mrs Dixon therefore withdrew it.

## Married Women's Property Laws in the Scandinavian Countries.

Fröken M. Gedarschiöld (Sweden).

DATING from the middle of this century, both in Sweden and Norway, as also in Denmark, many bills have been passed for

the improvement of the legal and social status of women. As regards the legal status of the married woman, however, the progress has been far slower.

In order to gain a more independent position for her in all the three Scandinavian countries, an indefatigable work has been going on during the last decades. Associations have been formed, the chief object of which has been the cessation of the husband's legal guardianship.

These endeavours have certainly borne good fruits in the three Scandinavian countries, even if none of them have made such progress towards the definite solution of the problem as England by her Married Women's Property Act of 1882.

Greatly do I regret that in my own country, *Sweden*, we are behindhand in comparison with Denmark and Norway as regards the Married Women's Property Laws.

The Swedes have recoiled from annulling the rights of the husband to the guardianship of his wife, and from promoting a new law which, according to the demands of the present day, would settle the question of married women's property rights. Sweden has, instead, followed the path of partial reforms, and, time after time, new pieces have been put into the old garment—the Swedish Marriage Act of 1734. The consequence is, that in many points the Swedish law anent the married woman is incomplete, vague and inconsistent.

In Norway and Denmark more radical reforms have been adopted, and the old laws of 1687 have been annulled. In their stead, in Norway, an Act was passed, on June 29th 1888, concerning Married Couples' Property Rights; while in Denmark a new law has been made this year which has as yet only just become valid.

"When husband and wife are married, he is her proper guardian, and shall sue and answer for her." So runs the first paragraph of the Swedish Act of 1734 anent Married Women's Property Rights; and this Act is still valid with the limitation clause of 1872, "except as regards property which is withheld from his management."

Thus the wife is still under the husband's guardianship, the property being held in community as a rule. There may, however, be certain things which belong to the one or the other as separate property; for instance, all real estate owned by either wife or husband before marriage or subsequently inherited.

Of the property held in community each party possesses the

half—the so-called *wedlock right*. This right, so long as the matrimonial relations continue, is, however, a latent right, and is, moreover, uncertain and varying in extent. All the joint property *the husband* may manage absolutely and entirely as he pleases. He has the legal right, even without consulting the wife, ay, even against her expressed wish, not only to dispose of his own share, but also her half of the goods and chattels held in community. It is only *the wife's earnings* that, though joint property, are not under the husband's control.

Even the separate property of the wife is under the administration of her husband. But unless he obtains her written consent, he has no right to sell, alienate or mortgage her separate real estate.

The rest of the separate property of the wife may be withheld from the husband's control by certain means prescribed by the law.

Another means of regulating the conditions relating to the administration of the estate of the married couple is by marriage settlement.

Unfortunately, in Sweden, a very strong prejudice has existed against marriage settlements, and it is only lately that they have been entered on to any extent, nor are they yet usual.

Even while the marriage is legally in force a separation as regards property can take place. Owing to a Bill passed last year this separation has been rendered still easier, since, if both parties come to an agreement concerning the matter, the simple application for a separation is sufficient to ensure it.

For the *Norwegian* and *Danish* laws, as in the Swedish, a joint proprietorship of the married couple in all property is the fundamental law. The great advantage under these Acts compared with the Swedish is that a married woman is of age at the same time (21 years) as the spinster.

The joint property shall be administered by the husband alone. He has, however, as is the case in Sweden, no right, without the wife's sanction, to alienate, sell or mortgage landed property which the wife owned previous to marriage.

Each party administers his or her separate property, unless the administration thereof by a special proviso or agreement be left in the hands of the Court of Chancery or some suitable person.

By marriage settlement the holding of property in community can be partly or entirely rescinded, and all conditions regarding the property and administration thereof be arranged.

A settlement can be made not only, as in Sweden, previous to matrimony, but also subsequently, which is, of course, a great boon.

That which a married woman earns by independent activity she alone has the right to control.

## Property Laws affecting Married Women in Germany.

Frau Stritt (Germany).

It has fallen to my share to give you a short account of the Married Women's Property Laws in Germany. I hope to meet your wishes if I refrain from a statement of the different systems of property relations that are practised at the present time in the different German states, as all particular codes will be superseded in six months' time by the new Civil Code for the whole German Empire, which will come into force on the 1st of January 1900.

Although we by no means ignore the high ideal value and the practical advantages of a universal German code, or wish to deny its great progress and acquirements in general in comparison with the laws up to the present time, yet one thing is certain—to German women the new Code does not yet do justice. On this point it is not only not in harmony with, but stands in the harshest opposition to, the economic, social, intellectual and moral development and necessities of our time.

This refers to the sections treating of "Marriage Laws in General," of "Parental Authority," and of "The Rights of the Illegitimate Children and the Unmarried Mothers." But above all, it refers to our new Married Women's Property Law, which not only most plainly puts forward the *principle* of the subjection of the married woman and the loss of her own individuality, but also for practical life is of the farthest reaching and deepest importance, as it will always come into force, unless by a special marriage contract another arrangement is agreed upon by husband and wife.

Of the three existing systems in Germany of matrimonial arrangements—the Roman dower arrangement, the community of property and the union of property, where the husband has

the management and the use of his wife's fortune—our law-givers have considered the last named as the most suitable for our time, and taken it as the basis of the new Married Women's Property Law. Its first fundamental paragraph runs thus: "The property of the wife becomes through marriage subject to the husband's administration and use. To the property brought in belongs also the property which the wife acquires during marriage." To avoid misunderstandings it may here be stated, that by this is only meant property acquired by inheritance or gift. In all that the wife may earn during her marriage, in her husband's trade, she has not the smallest share; on the other hand, what she earns by her own independent trade or industry, or in any business of her own, is at her free disposition as her so-called reserved property. This is the only real and great acquisition for our sex in the new Code, the importance of which, however, is essentially limited, as the husband, by virtue of his marital authority, may object to her trade, or may at any time withdraw a formerly given consent.

The same threadbare arguments which are used to prove the necessity of the subjection of woman for her own good and that of the family in general, are of course also applied to this Marriage Property Law in particular; but we think them as superfluous as they are illogical, because the economic dependence of woman in marriage would bring with it her social and moral dependence also if the latter were not expressly laid down in the marital authority of the husband. This economic dependence has been the source of the deepest humiliation and the deepest physical and moral misery of womankind in all ages. That by the giving up of her property the wife is placed herself at the mercy of an avaricious, brutal or unconscientious husband, is so self-evident, is confirmed so many thousand times in the experience of daily life, that it seems utterly *incomprehensible* how just on this very point the well-known attitude of protection should play such a conspicuous part.

In the first place, we are taught that by the law which puts the man in possession of his wife's property, that property is protected from the mismanagement and extravagance *of the wife*.

Now, to be sure, experience shows that the wife, taking into account her smaller opportunity for earning her livelihood, is, as a rule, more economical and less inclined to extravagance than the husband; but granting that his protection is necessary, of what cruelty then are not our legislators guilty towards poor unmarried women and widows who stand alone, and are thrown upon their

own resources, while needing most sorely the protection of the law, when they leave to these latter the free disposal of their own property, thus giving them up without restraint to certain ruin?

This question will probably always remain unanswered. To another—about the guarantees that are offered to the wife against the always possible imprudent, frivolous or dishonest administration *of the husband himself*—the law gives an answer, satisfactory only to the uninitiated. In this case, the wife is at liberty to take legal measures against the husband and demand security, “if the fear is well grounded that her rights are injured and her fortune is endangered to a *considerable extent*.” But when will or can these fears of considerable danger seem to the judge well grounded? Surely only when a great part, or the whole, of the wife's property is already lost; and before that the wife will hardly resolve to complain, even if she can bring herself to take such a step that will forever destroy the harmony and peace of her married life.

There is, however, a more effectual one, a protection *from* the law by matrimonial contract, which instead of these legal property relations can substitute any other system—that of community of property in general, of acquisitions, of chattel, etc., and especially the system of complete separation of goods will secure the wife the full disposition of her own property. The legislators themselves refer the discontented German women on every occasion to this excellent expedient, and thereby pass a sharper and more crushing judgment upon the legal property laws than the most radical advocate of Woman's Rights has ever done.

Even the most simple-minded must ask themselves: Why then should legislators at all make such a law from which they are obliged to advise people to protect themselves? Moreover, these special contracts are entirely opposed not only to the moral meaning and being of marriage, but also to the popular German feeling, and especially to all womanly delicacy, for the German woman will in general object to show any personal mistrust towards the beloved husband by demanding a marriage-contract, even when ever so many experiences of others have brought home to her the sad consequences of too blind confidence. To preserve and protect this delicacy, this mutual confidence, the most precious boon of marriage, and so to raise the moral character of wedded life, should be the task of a law that is fitted for the present day.

All these and many other well-grounded arguments we have

vindicated in word and print, in meetings and conventions, in resolutions and petitions, etc. We have pointed out the fact that all the newer foreign codes make allowance for a higher standard of civilisation. That in the United States, in England, Scandinavia, Hungary, some parts of Austria, and even in Russia since the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, the complete separation of goods has been introduced as Married Women's Property Law, and that no disadvantage, no disturbance of family life has resulted from this. We have declared that not only the injured woman, but also the German man must protest against a system which—though made to uphold the husband's dignity as head of the family—in truth only wrongs that dignity by abandoning to him, by legal force, what every just and sensible man would far rather owe to the voluntary decision of his wife.

We know that all these arguments will not convince our legislators at once; but we know also that it is our duty to keep our standpoint and to claim our rights at every opportunity, and we shall come again and again until we have gained them.

## Civil Disabilities of Women in France.

**Mme. Oddo Defflou (France). Proxy for Mme. Martin,  
Recording Secretary.**

Is it necessary to remark that such a large subject cannot be thoroughly dealt with in the short space of time allowed to me—ten minutes? All I can do is summarily to draw its main lines in order to give an idea, if not complete, at least accurate, of the state of things in our country.

Great by its extent, this question is no less so by its importance and by the urgency of its solution. Though we are inclined to no concession on the ground of political rights, it is plain that we need above all to move freely on the ground of private life. Political situations require but few men; they can never require many women. The exercise of political rights may, sometimes, be neglected without serious bad effects—at least from an individual point of view. But civil life cannot stand still a single minute. To forbid women to take part in it is to condemn them to a kind of suppression of themselves, to a situation very much like the one established by our laws for some dreadful crimes, before the 31st of May 1884, under the name of civil death.

France is now one of the European countries where the civil disabilities of woman are the most numerous. But we must state a capital difference between married and unmarried women—a difference quite in favour of the latter, for in our country, this country where there are so few children, single people always have the best share. Since the law of the 7th of December 1897, which allowed women to act as witnesses for the records of public registers, and, in general, in all public acts, the civil rights of a man and an unmarried woman are nearly the same. An unmarried woman may buy, sell, stipulate, engage herself, and though she often finds, in the persons of the other sex, magistrates, attorneys, solicitors, to whom she of necessity must apply for her affairs, auxiliaries whose impartiality is doubtful, at least no one forbids her to acquire herself the knowledge necessary in order to reap advantages from her rights, and to uphold them.

When we consider the position of the married woman, we see a very different state of things. For her, disability is the rule. Under two of the three matrimonial systems between which France is divided—that is to say under the system of common property and the dotal system—the woman has no right, not only over her property, but even over its income. It is the husband who gathers the whole revenue; he has the use of it, and he gives the wife, for household expenses, exactly what he pleases. The law says, it is true, he must keep her according to his position and fortune. What power can such a vague order have without any sanction? In actual fact, we often behold this most painful thing—a family almost destitute, a wife wanting the necessities of life, while the husband is wasting out of doors a great amount of money.

The third matrimonial system, that of separate property, gives her more liberty, allowing her to make use, as she pleases, of her own income and salary. Her situation then is very much like that of a minor set free from guardianship.

But even this system does not allow her to dispose of her property; she is never able to give, receive, sell, buy, traffic, apply herself to a calling, begin a lawsuit, play the part either of defendant or plaintiff in justice without her husband's express consent. I say *express*, for he is obliged to give an express consent for each legal act the woman wishes to do. It is impossible for him, even if he wished it, to show her he trusts her by setting her free. The article 223 forbids him to empower her once for all, and the article 1388 proclaims of no effect the renouncement of a single one of the many privileges that make



up his empire. The French husband is a despot who cannot abdicate; or again he is the master of a slave he cannot enfranchise.

Our dotal system deserves a special mention. While under the system of common property the husband only has power over the wife's personal money, while under the system of separate property she may not transfer it without his assent, under the dotal system neither can do it. Such is the main feature of this state of things. It shows, let us confess, how little the legislator who invented it valued mankind. He thought that women necessarily want intelligence, and men necessarily either intelligence or uprightness. Wherefore he has taken the woman's property—at least the part of it they call dotal funds—out of the disposal of both husband and wife. Stability, fixedness should seem to follow so excessive a prudence and make up to a certain extent for the outrage thus thrown upon mankind. It is not always so. An old saying of ours asserts that compromises may be made with heaven. These compromises here take the shape of business men whose peculiar employment is to extort from the wife, for the sake of the husband and a good reward for themselves, part of the dotal funds. They contrive this by exchanging them (which law and the marriage articles usually allow) with another estate or property worth much less, though it is said to be equivalent.

The system of common property, otherwise of woman's complete disability, is the one recognised by the greater part of the French, explicitly or implicitly. It is implicitly acknowledged by all those who make no peculiar matrimonial conventions; it is the legal system.

The system of separate property, otherwise of woman's partial disability, is little used, except by merchants, who find there a means to put their money out of their creditors' reach by investing it in the name of their wife. Shameful contrivances have so often taken place in such a way, separate property so often has meant cheating, that people hardly dare, amongst us, to have recourse to this palliative, which, on the other hand, men do not like, because their omnipotency is still lessened by the little that woman's ability may get. This little, that is too much for them, is, at the same time, too little for her. It is of too little consequence to counterbalance the other disadvantages of separate property, of which the chief one is to debar her from any participation in the husband's profits. So that she may have worked 20, 30 years with him and leave

the house, unless she made particular conventions, as poor as she entered it, without even having got a servant's wages.

The dotal system, otherwise system of both husband's and wife's disability, at least as to the dotal funds, is chiefly, at the present time, used in Normandy, where it was always in force. Before our Civil Code, a large part of France, that of the South, called the country of the written law, was ruled by the system of the last stage of Roman laws, such as it has been set by Justinian's compilation. It was called by the same name of dotal system, but was a great deal more liberal.

These statements sufficiently show how false is the far-spreading opinion that the French woman is better off than under the ancient monarchy. Never have we been more debased, more despised, more trampled under foot than under the Code Napoleon. It was at the same time a return to the past, and an insurmountable obstacle to all future progress. It was the signal of the definitive crushing down of our sex; we never could recover from the blows it has dealt us.

I do not mean to say that we have not already made some progress. There is no longer any other disability for married women, except their exclusion from family councils, and that of being tutors—a disability that is rather a freedom from a burden which is often heavy. If we ask for the suppression of it—this disability—it means that we want to confirm that in claiming our rights we do not wish to escape from our duties.

The unmarried woman has now little to wish for. As to the married woman, she has seen her fate slightly bettered. The law of 1893 has given her back, after the divorce *a mensa et toro*, her civil abilities, thus freeing her from the intolerable necessity of getting her husband's leave for every disposing or managing act; freeing her also from the tribute that he often exacted, when unscrupulous, of taking money each time he was to sign his name for her. The new law upon savings banks allows married women to place money in them, though they cannot take it back if it does not please the husband.

More and greater improvements are at hand. The Goirand proposal was made in order to enable married women to receive themselves their salary; but, incomplete, it did not allow them to make use of it. We believe it is going to be taken up and improved, and that the author of the new proposal will not hesitate to sacrifice some part of the husband's power to the rights of justice and common sense. M. Michelin, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, doctor of civil law, made during the last

Parliament a proposal of great consequence, which unfortunately has lapsed at the end of this Parliament without even having been discussed. It aimed at no less than entirely suppressing the disabilities of married women whose ability would have been subject to no other limitations than those consented to by themselves in their marriage act. Instead of being the rule, as now, disability would have become an exception; instead of being understood, it would have needed an express consent; instead of being the common law, it would have become the law of the few.

Unfortunately M. Michelin was not re-elected. We hope that one of our friends will undertake to resume his work and to bring it to a successful issue. To strive for it as much as we can, to strive, generally speaking, for all improvements referring to marriage, is the particular object of the society we formed a year ago under the name of "Groupe Français d'Etudes Féministes."

Our ideal is still higher. It seems to us that the woman's individuality and liberty are as sacred as the man's; that they ought to be, like his, inalienable and imprescriptible, that no convention aiming at lessening them ought to be acknowledged as lawful. But we know we must proceed by degrees, and not ask too much at a time, if we will not run the risk of losing all. We should be happy, just now, to come from a state of things where our bondage is compulsory, to another where it would be voluntary.

Marriage is woman's natural state; maternity her holiest, best task. And it is at the very time when she undertakes these duties so important for society, when in married life, in order to accomplish this great task, she exposes her own rest, health, often her life, it is at this very time our law proclaims her disabilities, setting her on the same footing with madmen, minors, interdicts, people condemned for disgraceful doings. What respect may she anticipate in her house, where her children who are of age, even her unmarried female servants, have more rights than herself? They say again that there is her empire, that there she is queen: a strange queen indeed, who is less powerful than all her subjects. Since moralists and philosophers declare to us (what seems to be very fair) that there must be a perfect harmony between rights and duties, instead of cancelling the single woman's rights when she marries, how we ought, on the contrary, to increase and enlarge them, if we were consistent and sincere! But moralists, philosophers, nearly all were men; their sublime principles, that are fit for us when it is they who profit, are not so when it is we who are gratified.

We are, nevertheless, hopeful. In our country, little inclined

to support women's rights, the suppression of married women's disabilities is one of the ideas that meets with the smallest resistance. We need only, I believe, in order to succeed, a little courage, a little constancy, and—why should we not say it?—a little boldness. An English statesman thought that the greatness of England comes from the fact that, in England, honest people are as audacious as knaves. We must turn to French women and tell them that when in France honest women are half as audacious as *the others*, their victory is certain. Our bringing up is quite the reverse from common sense. We are taught by our parents, by our teachers, that an honest woman, a good woman, a respectable woman must be careful not to show herself, not to make people speak of her—in a word, to hide and be nothing as much as she can. It comes to this that the good women must disappear and make place for the wicked, who do not fail to fill it. But it is quite the contrary from what is becoming and proper. It is for us to show ourselves, to make people speak of us, to dare to speak and to act; to the others it belongs to hide and be silent. Let us be convinced of this. And if we are as audacious as becomes honest women, claiming, by honest means, what is due to them, we shall soon get rid of our legal disabilities, and of the other miseries bound up with our present legal status.

Discussion then ensued, but as time was short it was hurried over. Mrs Carmichael Stopes, Mme. Causier, Mrs Gilot, Mrs Wm. White, Mrs Sheldon Amos, and Miss Florence Balgarnie were among those who joined in it.

# THE HOME AS WORKSHOP.

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SMALL HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, AFTERNOON.

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MISS FLORENCE BALGARNIE in the Chair.

Miss Balgarnie said that the question of the "Home as Workshop" would be approached from various points of view. No doubt they would hear something about the terrible sweating and insanitary conditions under which some home work was carried out. On the other hand, there were those present who would tell the meeting something of the home industries which were carried out under proper conditions. She might mention that in some rural districts—notably in Ireland—the introduction of that system had proved most advantageous to the cottagers.

## Home Industries.

Captain C. Rolleston read a paper, which had been prepared by his brother, Mr T. W. Rolleston (Ireland), who was unable to be present:—

In the course of his paper Mr Rolleston said that the home as workshop was often contrasted with work in the shop or factory, to the great disadvantage of the latter. The home, however, too often failed to answer in the most modest degree to what it ought to be, either as a home or as a workshop. The introduction of work into the home, when it was carried on as the principal means of livelihood, often destroyed real home life, and laid the workers open to exactions worse than those of the shop or factory, because so largely beyond the reach of regulation.

When the laws usual in Great Britain and on the Continent for regulating workrooms were enforced and obeyed, there was a strong and natural preference for them among workers. The laws were notoriously evaded in many cases, not merely in sweaters' dens, but in connection with establishments of the fairest external appearance and repute. There were, it is true, workrooms which were well and humanely managed, and which became valuable centres of social life. But the only true and effective reliance of the workers must be on organisation among themselves. That organisation would generally favour work in the workroom rather than work in the home. These remarks applied to cases when the work in question was the main or sole means of livelihood. It was quite otherwise with home industries in rural districts, of which Ireland furnished so many examples. The Irish Industries Association was developing this class of industry. It worked mostly through patronesses, who gave the workers the benefit of their cultured taste and careful supervision, marketing the goods for them through the Depots of the Association in Dublin and London, and also through the large sales carried on in English cities such as London, Liverpool, Manchester, etc. These industries were not the principal means of livelihood, but were an auxiliary to the main earnings of a cottager's or small farmer's family. They provided what was now more than ever necessary in these days of creameries and co-operative agriculture—an occupation for the young women of the family—and thus completed the broken circle of harmonious industrial effort. He had some reason to think that centres of industry of this kind occasionally influenced the wages given by regular trading firms in the neighbourhood, though they could not seriously compete with the latter. Through the agencies mentioned about £10,000 a year came to peasant homes in Ireland. Another example of women's organisation, affecting women's work in all its departments, and both in town and country, was afforded by the co-operative movement now spreading in this sphere of industry. A few years ago the speaker had visited a country town in Ulster for the purpose of establishing a lace school, and looking into the other industrial features of the place he had found a small shirt factory owned by a local trader. There were a dozen or twenty girls in the most miserable and unsuitable premises, with dirt and disorder everywhere, and every sign of a hard struggle for bare existence. Now there were sixty or seventy workers in an excellent and commodious workroom, and although the struggle still went forward it was carried on in a spirit of

cheerful enterprise far different from the mechanical toil of former days. What had wrought the change? It was the magic of co-operation. The trader who owned the business had failed, whereupon the girls formed themselves into a co-operative society, borrowed money from the bank on security kindly given by their parish priest, and acquired the business, which, he understood, had been prospering and growing ever since. Mr Rolleston gave particulars of similar organisations formed among home workers in needlework, embroidery and lace-making in County Fermanagh, County Galway, at Youghal, at Carrickmagross, at Loughlinbridge and elsewhere, and pointed out that the notorious abuses of the Truck Act and every other wrongful exaction could be best combated on these lines. Owing to the simple and inexpensive plant required, there was no sphere of industry in which co-operative methods could be more easily applied than that of needlework and the kindred industries of women. The Irish Lace Depot, as well as the Irish Industries Association and the Agricultural Organisation Society, had done excellent work in helping on this movement, but once established it was independent of any individual institutions, and could face the labour market with confidence.

## The Home as Workshop.

**Mr A. Ballantyne (Great Britain).**

I HAVE been asked to say a few words on the Home as a Workshop. Under present circumstances such a combination is practically impossible, the places which are indicated in this title being neither homes nor workshops.

It is vain to hope that we can ever restore the idyllic home life of the skilled handicraftsman of which Ruskin dreams. It is impossible to bring back the days when the workman was the maker of a complete work, in which he took the joy of the artist creator, and to which he gave the impress of his individuality.

We have left all this far behind us in these days of the Factory and Division of Labour Systems.

How do the actual conditions of the worker in the filthy slums realise our ideal of Home Life?

Here are some examples revealed by the recent investigations made by the Glasgow Council for Women's Trades:—

Mrs C., an old woman, lives in a one room house, rent 7s. 6d. per month. She is employed in "finishing" woollen shirts, for which she is paid 2½d., 4d. and 6d. per dozen, each dozen taking two, four and five hours respectively to "finish." Her average earnings are from 5s. to 6s. per week, off which she pays about 2½d. for thread. When visited, the shirts on which she was working were found piled on the bed, where her two grandchildren were lying ill of some unknown disorder. The house was in a shockingly dirty state.

Take another case. Mrs D. makes children's pinafores at 10d. and 1s. 8d. a dozen. Although paid at such different rates, both classes of work take the same time—namely, fourteen hours per dozen; and here I should point out that home work lends itself to one of the greatest economic evils of women's industries—the difference in the rates of pay for work of the same nature and efficiency. I do not say that this is exclusively characteristic of home work, but, owing to the isolated condition of the workers and the absence of information as to the general rates in the trade, there is greater opportunity in their case for the shops which employ them to pay less than the current rates. Mrs D.'s average earnings are from 9s. to 10s. a week; she can rarely make as much as 12s., and sometimes she only makes 3s. She stated she was kept sitting from six in the morning until ten or past it every night, and until she was dizzy and could hardly see. Her husband does the housework.

I do not know if Miss Irwin wishes to discourage masculine competition in domestic affairs, but I find she appends a note to this case—"house filthy."

And so on through the dreary evidence *ad infinitum*. Not much material for home life here, apparently.

Instead, therefore, of trying to bring back the social and industrial ideals of an earlier time, let us rather apply ourselves to the study of the conditions which modern life has brought with it, and let us extend to them too some degree of loyal acceptance and patient study, and make an effort to see whether, by being developed on their own lines, they may not, after all, be productive of the greatest good to the community. Let us consider whether a factory system under an enlightened Factory Law, as perfect as expert knowledge can make it, may not prove to be that best suited both to our modern needs and our modern comfort and well-being. Certain it is that the old clothes which the community has outgrown can never again be made to fit it comfortably.



Let us therefore endeavour to do the best we can with the materials we have at hand. We may thus, after all, be able "to find our ideal in the real."

The limited time at my disposal does not allow me to deal with the many economic issues involved in the question of home work. I can only make one brief reference in passing to its possible effect on wages.

It is interesting to note that numbers of the more intelligent of the women employed in the factories and workshops speak very strongly against it on the ground that the long and irregular hours such as usually accompany home work tend surely, if indirectly, to lower wages, and in some cases even where the total earnings were very low the workshop hands have been found to refrain on principle from taking work home after shop hours through fear of thus producing an artificial standard of wages. As a worker was once heard to say, "Home workers are used as a screw to reduce the others. Married women take work home, and sit up half the night to do it, and lots of them get their children to help them after school hours. They can thus lift fairly good wages at the end of the week, and when *we* complain the manager says, 'Look at So-and-so's big pay. Why can't you make this with the same rates?' And in the end the rates are reduced for everybody."

Wages cannot, however, be directly dealt with by Act of Parliament; at least, the principle of fixing either a minimum or a living wage has not yet been adopted in British legislation. So with respect to this point I will follow the discreet example of the old Scotch minister and only "look my difficulties in the face and pass on."

I would rather, for the present, ask your attention for the side of home work to which legal regulation may be fittingly applied—namely, the sanitary side.

One of the points brought out by the investigations into home work conducted by the Women's Industrial Council of London, and the Glasgow Council for Women's Trades, was the grave danger to the workers, and to the community generally, arising from the spread of disease through garments and other articles being made in dirty and insanitary dwelling-places.

Naturally a considerable amount of public interest has been aroused by the evidence adduced on this point. Public opinion has ripened to the conclusion that legal regulation of some kind is necessary, and a demand is now being made for it as a protection for the public health.

Where opinion is somewhat divided is as to which of the two branches of legislation we should apply for our remedial measures—whether to the Public Health Acts or to the Factory Acts. In fact, whether we are to consider the places in question as homes or as workshops? It seems to me that a gathering such as this, in which expert opinion is so well represented, furnishes a suitable opportunity for considering to which of these departments the regulation of home work might most suitably be relegated. I do not, of course, suggest any comparison as to the respective merits of the sanitary inspector and the factory inspector as administrators of the law—I can only touch on what appears to me to be the fundamental difference of principle and procedure which must guide the two respectively.

I trust that in the discussion which I understand is to follow we may have some helpful suggestions made on this point. Let me, in the first place, give a brief outline of how the case stands in the meantime with home work.

At present there is practically no regulation of home work. It is a sort of No Man's Land in the industrial and social worlds—that is to say when it is carried on by the individual worker, or by the members of one family. If other persons besides the members of the family were employed the home would then become a workshop within the meaning of the Factory Act, and be subject to its regulations.

In response to the cry which some years ago was beginning to make itself heard, Parliament made a tentative effort to get a hold of home work, and a provision was inserted in the Factory Act of 1891 requiring employers to keep lists of all the outworkers they employed, these lists to be open to the inspection of the factory inspector and the sanitary inspector; and later, by the Act of 1895, it was further decreed that copies of these lists should be sent twice a year to the factory inspector. But while the factory inspector may visit the homes of the workers whose names appear on these lists, he has himself no power to remedy any sanitary defects he may find there; all he can do is to report them to the local sanitary authority. Now, to consider the functions and powers of the latter, I cannot here attempt to do justice to the intricacies of sanitary law—that would require a lengthy paper by itself. But I would point out what appears to me to be the main points of difference in principle and procedure between these two branches of legislation.

Broadly speaking, the administrative machinery of the Public Health Acts is framed for the enforcement of provisions, the

application of which are, more or less, matters of opinion, while, on the other hand, the lines of application in the Factory Acts are fixed and definite.

To illustrate the difference I mean, let me take limewashing as an example. If limewashing is neglected in a place to which the Factory Acts apply, the factory inspector is empowered to take proceedings immediately and directly for having the grievance put right. If, on the other hand, limewashing is neglected in a place where the local sanitary authority is the administrator of the law, a highly involved process has to be gone through, which necessitates much vexatious delay, and which reminds one of nothing so much as the stages in the house that Jack built.

Legislation of some kind we shall have in all probability. If we are to have it, let it contain as little of the experimental element as possible. Home work is a difficult subject, but it has now been thoroughly investigated, and we have plenty of exact information got at first hand to guide us. We require a well-considered measure, clear and definite in its provisions, simple and effective in its application.

I believe these requirements are met in a Bill which has been drafted by the Women's Industrial Council of London, and is supported by the Glasgow Council for Women's Trades.

The main provision of this Bill is the regulation of home work, by requiring that the employer shall give out work only to those who have obtained a license from the factory inspector to show that their houses are suitable, and in a sufficiently sanitary condition for such work being carried on. This Bill proposes therefore to place the authority in the hands of the factory inspector rather than in those of the sanitary inspector, and it does so mainly on the grounds that the standard of the former is more uniform throughout the whole country, and is not so likely to be affected by local influences as that of the latter.

The system of licensing will so far safeguard the health of the public against the risk arising through the making of clothing and other articles in uncleanly and unhealthy dwelling-houses, and it may also have a generally salutary effect in raising the standard in these matters amongst this class of workers, as those who are anxious to procure and retain a license must, of course, make an effort to observe the necessary conditions for this. It may even lead to something in the way of organisation among them, and, by limiting the competition of the casual workers, tend to better the conditions of the *bona-fide* domestic worker.

## Home Industries in Hungary.

Baroness Ernest de Daniel (Hungary).

THE fashionable world in England has evinced considerable interest in, and paid some kind attention to, the products of Hungarian home industry, of which there has, for some little time, been a permanent exhibition in London.

I would suggest that the question of home industry is one of those questions that are most deserving of being taken up by the Council of Women, for there is hardly anything nobler than securing permanent work and reasonable wages to the poor people, and especially to the peasant women and girls spending their time in idleness. There is no doubt but that it will be easier to solve the social question when the wives and daughters of husbands and fathers, engaged either in factories or on farms, will not solely spend but also increase the earnings. This does not mean that the workman's wife at home is to sweat all day long; on the contrary, it must be made possible for her to fill up, by useful work, the spare time left her after having attended to her home and maternal duties, and in that useful work she might be assisted by the grown-up daughters of the house.

By dividing the work in a proper and rational way, sufficient time would be left for recreation.

After these preliminary remarks I am going to give the following particulars as regards the Hungarian Home Industries:—

Home industry is one of the most ancient occupations.

One who knows it thoroughly gives the following interesting and characteristic account of it:—

“In our country the home industry is due to the people having originally undertaken the manufacture of their own requisites. They had not to care for what strangers required; they were able to preserve the ancient and traditional patterns, which in some cases can be traced back to the time of migration. These patterns, betraying Asiatic origin, remind one of symbols of days long gone by. In the atmosphere of liberty the people were able to assert their traditions, their lively imagination and sense for colours.”

Home industry possesses nowhere more importance and *raison d'être* than in my country, for it is to be one of the most efficacious means for solving the social question in certain parts of South Hungary. The farm-hand, who works but three

months out of the twelve, being by necessity idle for the remaining portion of the year, will be able, through home industry, to find for himself and his family some useful and permanent work in his spare time; and it is, as already mentioned, very important that the female members of the small farmer's and labourer's family should also work, securing thus wages and contributing towards the support of the family.

The Government of my country is taking some interest in the superior section of home-made articles by a number of useful arrangements as to technical improvements in the home industries, and by affording certain facilities for the introduction of new methods of occupations and for the realisation of the produced articles. For that purpose the Government has established technical classes and workshops, commissioning the Commercial Museum with the sale of the products, for the superior portion of which that institution has secured markets abroad and also in London.

According to statistical data, the Hungarian home industries embrace the following branches:—the wood industry, wicker-work, willow, piassava, sedge and straw plaits, crockery, textile fabrics, embroidery, tinder, iron, leather, tinware and wire.

According to particulars at our disposal, 53 counties, or nine-tenths of the whole country, are engaged in the home industries, namely, 38 counties in the wood industry; 46 in willow plaits; 16 in piassava; 25 in sedge-work; 22 in straw plaits; 29 in crockery; 44 in textile fabrics; 2 in tinder goods; 5 in iron ware; 2 in leather, and 1 in tinware and wire-netting.

As regards territorial expansion, the industries in wood, textiles, embroidery and tinware are the foremost.

As to the wood industry, 38 villages are engaged in the county of Csik; 31 in Háromszék; 29 in Kolozs; 51 in Szilágy; 56 in Szolnok-Doboka. The industries in textile fabrics and embroideries are followed by 70 hamlets in the county of Baranya; 26 in Háromszék; 36 in Nyitra; 29 in Pozsony; 38 in Szepes; 33 in Torontál; 28 in Ung; finally, the industry in tinware can be met with in 83 hamlets of Trencsén county.

From the *number of hands* engaged in the various branches of industry there would appear to be the most considerable manufacture of shingles, woodwares, agricultural implements, baskets, brooms, mats; the number of hands engaged in the first-named article being 1500 in the county of Kolozs; in the second article about 1000 in Nyitra; in the third, 1000 in Torda-Aranyos; in the fourth, 1500 in Hont; in the fifth, over 400 in Torontál; in

the sixth, 500 in Maros Torda ; 400 in Szatmár ; 700 in Udvarhely, and 900 in Zemplén. With the manufacture of straw plaits are familiar 500 persons in the county of Hajdu. Embroidery is being done by 1200 women in Koloza, and the manufacture of carpets in Torontál is responsible for about 3500 females. As regards the daily earnings the returns are not complete ; but it can be stated that of all the industry branches it is brick-laying, the producing of tiles and pottery, that secure the largest daily or weekly wages, wicker-work yielding the smallest earnings. A person engaged in crockery makes from 5fl. 50kr. to 12fl. a week, whilst a basket-maker gets 3fl. at the most, and too often not more than 1fl. 15kr. I estimate the weekly wages of a person engaged in the wood industry at from 3fl. 60kr. to 4fl. 20kr. Lacemakers earn far less than that, viz., 30kr. a day, or 1fl. 80kr. per week. Embroiderers make but 1fl. 90kr. a week. The weekly earnings of a linen-maker in Arva and Liptó counties come to 6fl. 50kr., whilst the chair-caner in Zólyom gets comparatively the most, i.e., 5fl. 40kr.

From all this it can be seen that in my country there is a large scope for the home industries, the number of articles they embrace being immense.

The people, while meeting their own requirements, dispose of their products at market-places and fairs ; they also hawk in certain articles.

All these facts tend to show that whereas in most foreign countries the home industries depend entirely upon factory-made goods, and are almost exclusively in the hands of the middleman, our people are mainly thrown upon their own resources, procuring independently the raw material, producing the various articles, and putting the same into circulation.

But from the above particulars it appears also that the home industries represent considerable power, great moral and material capital, which it is worth while to propagate, not only in my country, but far beyond its borders, for what I referred to not only affects beneficially and directly the material welfare of the people, but—and special stress must be laid upon this from the point of view of civilisation and general morals—refines the taste of the people, improves their morals and raises their love for work ; and Maurice Jokai, the greatest living Hungarian poet, rightly says,—

“Next to divine worship is—work.”

## The Woman's Home-Sloyd in Sweden.

Fröken Ann M. Hamilton (Sweden).

I WILL attempt to give a short account of how women in Sweden work at their looms in their own homes, and how they can be taught and trained for such work in schools, founded on and developed from the ancient home-sloyd.

The *weaving*-sloyd can be divided into two distinct branches—the purely practical branch, intended for household economy, and the artistic branch for home decorations. These, however, often go side by side; we see, particularly among our country people, how the commonplace items of daily life are elaborately decorated.

Textures of a purely practical kind, including plain linen, cotton and woollen fabrics, have naturally been superseded by factory products—certainly much cheaper, but also less durable. The *Scandinavian Exhibition* in Stockholm, 1897, however, gave evidence that there remains much of our old traditional home-sloyd. Norrland, that part of Sweden in which the flax is principally cultivated, had sent the finest home-spun and home-woven linen. Several other provinces, as Södermanland, Scania, etc., also exhibited fine proofs of this sloyd. In Westgothia a considerable home-weaving industry is carried on. They mostly weave for sale, and whole families live by this.

Art textures may also be divided into two groups or sections—those, where the designs are based on straight lines, are all worked in ordinary looms, with a horizontal warp; and those with undulating or varied designs worked in an upright loom with a vertical warp. The former represent the most numerous group, and among these we find a greater technical multiplicity than, I believe, in any other country. To the other group there only belongs one kind of weaving, generally called “flamen.”

Of these textures, all kinds of practical and ornamental objects were made, as cushions for benches, wall hangings, bed curtains, etc. The peasant woman made all these different things in the home; she prepared her own materials, dyed her own yarn, and designed these exceedingly effective patterns worthy of our great admiration. It is quite surprising what an inherited artistic talent and skill is noticeable in our Swedish peasantry.

The home industry has its peculiar characteristics in every province where it has reached any greater development.

We have many purely national kinds of embroidery, and we may divide these, as the other textile products, into those with geometric designs and those with varied designs. The prettiest bands for apron-strings, caps, etc., come from Dalecarlia, but are also found in different parts of the country. They are mostly worked in looms, but sometimes hand-plaited.

These beautiful traditional arts were nearly extinct, when about the year 1870 some Swedish ladies, headed by the authoress, the Baroness Sophie Aldersparre, and the lady artist, Mrs Hanna Winge, attempted to revive the ancient home-sloyd, and to awaken a more widespread interest in it. For this purpose they formed an association in Stockholm in 1874, which they named "*Handarbeters Vänner*" ("The Friends of Handiwork"), with the following motto: "Elevation of home-sloyd, artistic, national."

The first object of the society was to collect what still remained of the ancient home-sloyd, and in this respect it was most energetically assisted by the artist, Jakob Kulie. Weavers were fetched from Scania, old techniques were studied and gradually taught to others. Some years later complete schools in art-weaving and art-embroidery were organised, from which many of the pupils go out as teachers, and during the last 3 years a special course in art-embroidery, principally theoretical, has been arranged for already trained teachers. These schools last year counted 177 pupils.

When the society, "The Friends of Handiwork," was started there were only a few old peasant women in Scania who could weave the above-mentioned "flamen" (or gobelin) texture. These old women taught the younger generation, and thus, through the efforts of the society, this beautiful art has been preserved. To begin with, only the old designs were copied, but gradually, as they grew more expert in the technicalities of this work, they attempted new designs, which have been produced with great success. This art is now generally known, several of our best artists have made designs for it, and we have endeavoured to develop this art in the most various ways. The Society has not only worked for the development of the art-weaving, but in an equally high degree for embroidery and lace-making.

About 200 workers are employed by the society; of these the greater number work in their homes, and many live in the country.

Recently a great many enterprises have been started, based on the home industry. Of these some are mercantile enterprises and others schools.



The official agricultural associations in the provinces encourage the study of home-sloyd, which they support liberally with annual grants. Courses for teachers are held, and they enjoy not only free instruction, but even an allowance. Large sums are devoted to the teaching in all branches of home-sloyd in the National High Schools and in separate sloyd schools.

The founder of the *Handarbeters Vanner*, the above-mentioned Baroness Adlersparre, gives a *résumé* of the advantages of home-sloyd in the following notes :—

1. Utilising time that would otherwise have been wasted.
2. Getting accustomed to produce useful and beautiful work.
3. Giving an additional charm to home life by working in common for the beautifying and decorating of the home.
4. Acquiring a developed artistic taste.
5. Gaining the capacity of distinguishing between good or bad, beautiful or ugly, even with respect to articles of trade, thereby saving many a big sum that would otherwise have been fruitlessly spent in the purchase of inferior articles.
6. And finally the means of gaining a subsistence for women without having to leave their homes uncared for.

#### DISCUSSION.

Mrs J. H. Muirhead, of Birmingham, said she had no doubt that an artistic handicraft carried on by the workers in their own homes was capable of adding great joy to life. But to those who were dwellers in the large cities, this aspect of the question was not acceptable. The home worker as a competitor with the factory operative was under disadvantages. She had quite recently visited many of those homes in Birmingham, and she found that the rate of wages earned by the girls at home compared very badly with those in vogue in the factories. In such work as button-carding, she found that the girls who worked at home could not possibly earn more than 6s. 8d. a week. That was, of course, unskilled labour, but much the same conditions prevailed amongst the women who carried on skilled trades at home. She would instance the case of burnishing, which was considered a skilled trade because it was necessary to serve an apprenticeship to learn it. The girls who worked at home earned about 15s. a week, but the wages of factory hands engaged in the same work varied from 18s. to 22s. a week.

Another thing which she regarded as opposed to the system of home work was the liability to ill-health, and she would instance the case of the button industry to illustrate the case. In that industry it was necessary to have a lathe, and the flying particles of bone were a considerable element in the development of consumption. When lathes were used in the living-room—as they invariably were—it was a source of danger to the health of the children. Another grave aspect of the question was that home workshops tended to the evasion of the factory laws. In one case it was found that there was a trap door under the cupboard of a living-room which communicated to a cellar beneath, where there was no outlet whatever. In the confined shop five men worked as well as the inmates of the house.

**Mme. Bach Gladstone** (of Lyons) gave some particulars of home work as she had found it in that town. There was a great deal of weaving done there which necessitated the use of looms. The result was that the family were often sacrificed to find place for it. She had gone into the question carefully, though not from the point of view of the expert, and, like Mr Ballantyne and others there who might claim to be experts, she must utterly condemn it. There could be no revision of it; the whole system should be swept away. In Lyons, people took little or no notice of contagious diseases, and work was constantly taken to homes where contagious diseases were prevalent. As to wages, she found that the girls rarely earned more than 1s. 6d. a day, and even that sum necessitated very long hours. That was not sufficient to keep the girls, and as they were very fond of having nice clothes, they took most undesirable means of getting more money. She found young unmarried girls employed in home work to a much larger extent than wives and mothers.

**Mrs Frederick Nathan** (President of the Consumers League, New York) asked the meeting to consider what kind of a home it must be where the people took work for which they received starvation rates of wages. The system was pernicious, for the people who took work home were very poor, and they were obliged to screen contagious disease. The risk to the consuming public was therefore very great. She contended that people should only buy factory-made goods. If there were such a demand, it would materially decrease the amount of home work. They should not try to get bargains when they are bargains because people are paid starvation rates of wages for the making of the goods.

**Mrs R. E. Greenwood**, who had just been appointed tenement house inspector at Sheffield, said there was no doubt the question of home work bristled with difficulties. She would point out that there were very large powers under the Public Health Act to deal with the homes of the people. In Southwark there was a woman tenement inspector whose duty it was to enter the houses and see that the houses were clean, the walls lime-washed, and the drains cleaned. The same thing could be done in other places, for the machinery existed under the Public Health Act. She believed the way of remedying the insanitary conditions of those homes would be the appointment of sanitary inspectors who could go to the homes of the people and show them how to keep their homes clean.

**Mrs Sheldon Amos** said that if they were going to prevent women from working in their own homes, what was going to happen when cheaper railway fares would enable people to live in suburban districts? She was afraid there was a danger amongst the English public of forgetting the great good which came from the fact that the parents and children were together, though they should bring all their powers to get proper home conditions for the people and then leave them to choose whether they would work at home or at a factory.

**Countess Schack** gave more particulars of the result of the home work system in Germany. There, as in England, the wages were very low, and one case had been brought to her knowledge where one herring was made to serve as three dinners for three people. Another result of the system was that parents tried to keep the children from schools. What they wanted was more sanitary inspectors to visit the homes of the people, and some attempts made to organise the people. It was a sin and a shame—for which they paid highly—that more notice was not taken of those bad cases.

**Miss Shearman Crawford** (Ireland) said she knew that the home work system had done a great deal of good in some parts of the country. On the other hand, there were cases in which no good results could be recorded.

**Mr J. R. MacDonald** pointed out that the moment the home worker entered into competition with the factory hand, the standard of life was lowered, and that a vigilant watch should be kept upon those semi-philanthropic revivals of home industry which had been spoken about. How were they going to deal with it? Mrs Amos seemed to think that attempts were being made to legislate home work out of existence. No such attempt

was being made, but a great many people desired to put an end to what was pernicious in the system. Moreover, it was little use trying to eliminate evil conditions after they had been in existence for a long time. They must be prevented from the beginning, and the only way to do that was to make it illegal for work to be given to any home worker who could not show a certificate that his place was fit for a domestic workshop. He thought domestic workshops ought to be under the control of the factory inspector rather than the sanitary inspector. The latter officer had to report to his committee, and a clumsy process of investigation followed before any remedy was applied; but the factory inspector could step in and at once put his powers into effect. The sanitary officer was a detective, the factory inspector was an executive officer.

**Mr Herbert Burrows** said he should like to ask those ladies who favoured home work to go and live in some of those homes as he had seen them in the East End of London. They wanted to do away with some of the evils by legislating for it as much as possible. If the future life of England was to depend upon its home life, then they should do their best to improve it rather than lower the status by introducing work. What he asked for was the abolition of slavery. When they talked about freedom of women at the same time as they were talking about home work, they were discussing a thing which did not exist. He didn't want them to go away with the idea that he wanted to restrict the freedom of women. What he wanted to see was the freedom of women from the degrading conditions of the present industrial system.

**Mrs F. G. Hogg** stated that those who were acquainted with workshop homes knew that it was only by the wildest stretch of imagination that they could be called "homes." Anybody who knew anything of the conditions which prevailed would try and put down the hideous system. It was perfectly impossible to effect any scheme of organisation for such people, so they must try the method of enforcing by the State such sanitary regulations as were necessary for the good of the whole community. To lift those workers from their apathetic squalor was to make them not only worthier and better, but also more productive human machines. It was only by State regulation of home work that they could hope to take light to "those that sat in darkness."

**Mrs Hicks** also condemned the system, stating that she recently found some women in Yorkshire who were making

gentlemen's flannel shirts at 4½d. a dozen. That was home work—a system which she condemned in its entirety. The question of the cleanliness of the homes should be put in the hands of an officer who could deal with it at once and effectively.

## TRADES UNIONISM.

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SMALL HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

*FRIDAY, JUNE 30, MORNING.*

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MRS GEORGE ADAM SMITH in the Chair.

**Mrs G. A. Smith**, in opening the proceedings, said: To-day we are met to discuss the very important question of Trades Unions for women. This is a matter which is daily coming more into prominence and being recognised as one of the fundamentals of ensuring the proper position and treatment of working women.

It may not be out of place to give a very brief account of what has been done in the matter in this country.

Though it is only within the last five-and-twenty years that this subject has received much attention from the public, yet long before that the necessity was felt by the women workers themselves that they should be properly organised, so that the strength of the body of workers should compel attention where that of the individual had failed.

As long ago as 1834, when the formation of unions was epidemic, the scheme for a Grand National Trades Union provided for "female lodges" as well as for those of men. And such lodges were actually formed—amongst others a "Lodge of Female Tailors" and one of "Operative Bonnet-makers."

From time to time other attempts at union were made by women workers in particular trades, but none of these lasted long; they were always weaker than the men's unions, not only in number, but in cohesiveness and organisation.

The year 1872 saw the beginning of the present movement for women's unions. In that year the Edinburgh Upholstery Sewers' Society was established, which has continued until now.

From this date the tide of opinion turned, and trades unionism

for women entered on a new phase of progress, largely through the initiation and enthusiasm of one woman—Mrs Emma Paterson—who, after a visit to the United States in 1873, gave herself up to the task of organising women's labour in England. Societies were started in London of women bookbinders, upholsterers, shirtmakers, and later of tailoresses and laundresses. And before Mrs Paterson died in 1886 she had founded the Women's Protective and Provident League (now known as the Women's Trades Union League) as a central organisation, and established in Bristol the National Union for Working Women [1875].

Since then there has been progress—though often uncertain and fluctuating. Women's labour lies for the most part on the margin between skilled and unskilled, and much of it is so easily replaced that a period of slack trade leads almost inevitably to a serious disorganisation. Still, a solid basis seems now to be laid, and according to the latest available statistics there are over 100,000 women enrolled in trade unions. [In 1892 there were 99,650.]

One of the most hopeful aspects of the matter is the disappearance of the former indifference, jealousy and opposition on the part of the *men*. The strange and foolish impression that prevailed that the organisation of women's labour would injure the opportunities of the men has been recognised as a fallacy, and it is now seen that it is women's *unorganised* labour which is a more serious menace (because itself more at the mercy of the employer). Not only have the men withdrawn their opposition, but they are now assisting the women to organise, and delegates from women's unions find ready admission to trades councils and the Trade Union Congress.

It is not an easy matter, as all who have worked at it will know, to induce organisation among working women. The difficulties arise from ignorance, apathy, sensitiveness to social distinctions, from an overflowing labour market—and perhaps the greatest obstacle is that most women look forward to marriage and a consequent release from the necessity of continuing the same occupation.

This brings into their work an element of uncertainty and instability, greatly reducing their industrial efficiency and consequently their power to organise and combine, for it is the possession of technical skill that forms the basis of organisation. Wherever the women workers possess particular skill and experience, and are engaged in a fairly stable employment, the requisites of effective trade organisation exist.

It would be well, however, to make it clear that our sympathy with the encouragement of trades unions among women does not mean our recognition or acceptance of *married* women's labour as a normal, or even tolerable, feature of our social life. For the wife to take her place as wage-earner beside her husband too often means the deterioration of the home. The narrowing of the home into a place of hurried meals and sleep is the worst injury modern industry has inflicted in our midst. Factory life for the married woman too often ruins the physical and moral health of the family. Save in extreme circumstances, no increase of the family wage can balance these losses, the value of which are of an infinitely higher quality.

But for the unmarried woman, I am sure, we all feel that every effort should be made to encourage trades unionism. It is required for the woman's defence precisely in proportion to her comparative ignorance of affairs, isolation and helplessness as an individual. Reports of factory inspectors reveal the prevalence of much petty tyranny, oppression through prices and exactions, against which the individual may protest in vain but the Society can make itself heard. Already one very great success has been gained by united effort—the appointment of women factory inspectors. It is to be hoped that the number of these may be increased and their sphere enlarged, so as to cover all kinds of women's employments.

In conclusion, when we come to ask what is to be done to better the condition of working women, two requisites become evident. The first is *education*—*education moral* (showing the importance of union and the necessity of subordinating small differences to the common weal); *education technical* (giving increased skill, and widening the number of industries in which women can work); and the second requisite is *organisation*.

And it is with the object of understanding and propagating the best methods of organisation that we are met to-day.

## Trades Unions and the Labour Problem.

Mrs Cornelia S. Robinson (U.S.A.).

TRADES UNIONS do not peculiarly belong to any nation; that is, they are not an English or German as opposed to an American



institution as some claim, but are evolved from the condition of the civilisation.

England was the first nation to create the necessary conditions, and therefore they arose in England ; when America created like conditions they arose there. The Trades Union is the economic accompaniment of organised capital, and a *sine qua non* to the economy of modern industrial relations.

The Trades Union is the culmination of the labourer's efforts through the various transitions through which he has passed. Under the system of specialised labour wage-earners cannot make individual contracts. The requirements of industry involve the group method of working, where labourers are no longer individual producers but interdependent parts of a productive aggregate or group ; they must commence work at the same moment ; they must cease work on the instant. This necessitates a uniform number of working hours and a uniform rate of wages.

In all questions of wages it is the wages of the group and not of the individual ; they must all rise or fall together ; and besides making a common interest it makes united action indispensable.

The adoption of machinery makes these conditions inevitable. Under this system the labourers learn to know each other ; they learn the amount of wages each receives ; their interests are welded and the Trades Union is the outcome. In them the wage-earner learns of the needs of the several groups ; they become co-workers and agree upon means and methods to promote the welfare of all. In these associations is developed the disposition and augmented the strength to stand shoulder to shoulder for mutual advantages. The trades union is the labourer's school wherein he learns the nature of public institutions, their uses and necessities, as well as to defend his rights and find remedy for his wrongs. It is the protective principle applied to labour. That this is not always apparent in their administration is due to the undeveloped state of human intelligence, which on many occasions leads to the wage-earners' coercion by unscrupulous and despotic leaders ; but the same infirmity prevents the employer from comprehending the nature of the institution. This, however, is less true of England than of any other nation, because England has had a longer experience and profited by it. In any case it does not in the least militate against the value of the institution. The fact of involuntary association insures an increasing intelligence and its more general diffusion, which in turn assures in time the elimination of detrimental features within the association itself.

Trades unions have grown out of the labour problem, and to mention one is to involve the other. They are the evidence not only that labourers collectively speak for themselves, but that they have sufficiently developed individualism to speak collectively through a representative. Everywhere at first capital is reluctant to recognise these conditions, but education in the way of experience, though sometimes rather costly, gradually broadens the view of the subject, and the judgment is then governed by wisdom.

In America it is imperative that we should complain of this anomalous attitude, for while the economic relation corresponds in every machine-using country, under any form of government, America pre-eminently has placed herself in the position to present the wage-earner's relation to the social and industrial world as self-evident. America is a nation of home consumers, and the first interest of American producers is to supply the home market. As 70 per cent. of the population are wage-earners (and the fact is America's glory), it follows that the wage-earner constitutes the market. The fact that the wage-earner and the consumer are vested in the same individual is no excuse for ignorance of the economic relation of his several functions. As a wage-earner he is the primary cost in production; as a wage-spender or consumer he is the market. While the quantity of consumption of any given product largely depends upon the increase of population, the diversity of consumption, and therefore of industries, entirely depends upon the variety of products he consumes, and this latter is the most important factor in progress, for upon the increasing variety of consumption depends, in its true sense, what is known as the extent of the market.

To recognise and live up to this primary principle is to solve the labour problem for the world. In the wage-earner's double relation to social and industrial welfare the problem of the day is how to overcome the one and increase the other.

The solution requires an intelligence keen enough to discern these two functions in the same individual and treat them in their separate relations. It is true it is always necessary to success that the cost of production should be minimised. On the other hand, to extend the market, it is equally necessary to constantly increase wages.

This may appear paradoxical and would be if the functional relation was not so entirely different.

In minimising the cost of production it is absolutely necessary

to consider wages collectively, overcoming them by the constant adoption of improved methods or machinery; that is, whatever will produce more product or increased sales in a given time, thus making the total cost of labour per unit of product actually less. When this important point is consciously recognised by producers their whole attention will be directed toward adopting superior methods, and not mis-directed as at present toward repressing wages or replacing fair-priced labour with cheap labour, which so seriously affects the progress of the individual and curtails the market, thus in the end making cheap labour the dearest. Not until this plane of intelligence is reached will there be a comprehensive knowledge of the principle of protection or a feeling of security in the protective policy. The time cannot be distant, for the enlightened countries are gradually emerging from that benighted idea that paternalism and protection are identical. Nothing is further from the truth.

Once entered by the internal application of the protective principle, we furnish opportunity for free education through our public school system which endows the rising civilisation with intelligence for their business careers, and fits them for entrance to the truly American trades union. When wage-earners have reached that period of their lives they may safely be considered an integral part of American civilisation. This brings us to the fundamental principle of economic philosophy that human wants are the basis of progress, and the nation which discovers this principle and creates opportunities for their gratification is the nation which provides the means of happiness and stands pre-eminently the leader of nations. It is particularly necessary that women should be imbued with the true principle of economic philosophy, because woman, being the closest companion of the child during its most impressionable years, it becomes her peculiar function to be the natural inculcator of principle.

If woman will only recognise her point of vantage and adequately equip herself, she may thus comprehend the principles of action and become conscious that she possesses the potent force to accelerate progress. To possess the conviction that high birth is a personal gratification, and why it is so that the amount and quality of wealth consumed creates the standard of civilisation, and that wealth earned is the instrument of man's salvation is to be conscious of the true significance of the words of Longfellow, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."

## Les Ouvrières de l'Aiguille à Paris.

Mme. Vincent (France).

PEU de questions économiques, donnent lieu à d'aussi ardentes discussions, que le travail féminin, qui aujourd'hui, s'étend dans toutes les branches de l'industrie. L'emploi des machines introduit de plus en plus la femme dans les usines, les ateliers les fabriques, et la substitution de la main d'œuvre féminine, a amené la baisse des salaires, dont sont victimes les travailleurs des deux sexes.

L'organisation corporative d'autrefois, en réglementant et en limitant la production, avait précisément pour but de parer à l'avitissement des salaires. Nous trouvons, dans les anciens statuts des corps de métiers, la preuve de l'utilité de cette réglementation si critiquée autrefois, mais presque démontrée aujourd'hui.

Dans certains états, la réorganisation des corporations est préconisée, comme un palliatif aux maux, dont souffre la génération actuelle. En 1789, une pétition de femmes, adressée au roi, demandait que les métiers qui réclament l'emploi de l'aiguille et du fuseau leur fussent réservés, que les hommes ne pussent être couturières, brodeuses, lingères, marchands de modes. Ce fut l'un des dix-sept articles de la Déclaration des Droits de la Femme, présentée par Olympe de Gouges.

Les Corporations des Couturières et des Lingères, disparurent à la suppression de toutes les Corporations en 1791. Depuis cette époque jusqu'à nos jours, le métier de couturières a suivi une progression ascendante. Les ouvrières de Paris, dominent le monde entier par les productions sans cesse nouvelles et variées de la mode et le goût tout personnel que la Parisienne sait donner à toute nouveauté.

En 1848, une proposition fut faite en vue de créer des ateliers nationaux féminins, afin de centraliser et de donner du travail aux ouvrières nécessiteuses.

Delphine Gay, chef de division à l'atelier national de la rue Fontaine, avait demandé à l'Assemblée Nationale, de commanditer les ouvrières, qui offriraient des garanties de capacité, et de probité, pour être associées à la condition que les femmes employées par l'Association n'auraient aucune responsabilité.

Delphine Gay obtint du Gouvernement, une somme de 17,000 francs, destinée à fonder une Association ouvrière de femmes.

Elle fonda plus tard le club fraternal des lingères ; c'était le commencement des syndicats féminins. Toutes les questions intéressant les femmes y furent discutées, et surtout l'égalité des salaires, pour égalité de travail. Malheureusement ce club, où la politique se mêla, eut peu de durée.

En 1874, une tentative de syndicat fut essayée pour unir les ouvrières couturières et lingères.

Sous les auspices de Monsieur Barberet, une commission d'initiative de 32 membres, fit un appel à la Corporation ; l'alliance comprenait les sections des couturières, confectionneuses lingères et brodeuses.

Ce syndicat réunit une centaine d'adhérentes mais il ne put arriver à des résultats. Il fut néanmoins représenté à l'Exposition de Philadelphie en 1879.

La dernière société pour les femmes fut l'Avenir des Travailleuses, association co-opérative d'ouvrières en robes et manteaux, constituée le 17 Mars 1898. Le siège était 7 rue d'Artois. Un emprunt obligatoire de 10,000 francs, fut demandé au public.

Entraînées par le Conseil, composé de personnes étrangères au travail, les ouvrières firent des frais d'installation considérables. Soit que la clientèle n'ait pas répondu, soit pour un autre motif, la société ne tarda pas à être en déconfiture.

Ce fut une tentative malheureuse dont le résultat est à déplorer pour la cause des travailleuses.

En 1894, un économiste distingué, Monsieur Charles Benoist, publiait un livre, plein de vérités douloureuses, de documents presque terrifiants, "Les Ouvrières de l'Aiguille." Il montrait la moyenne du salaire des ouvrières, avec les chômages, et les mortes saisons. Les plus favorisées, les plus habiles, parviennent à gagner 12 à 1300fr. par an, d'autres très heureuses encore, obtiennent à condition de n'être jamais malades, un salaire annuel de 900 à 1000fr. par an.

L'industrie du vêtement, d'après les statistiques publiées par le Ministère du Commerce, occupe 400,000 ouvrières en France. La journée est de dix heures, l'atelier ouvre à 9 heures du matin, il ferme à 8 heures du soir, en bonne saison les heures supplémentaires sont souvent prolongées jusqu'à 11 heures ou minuit. Ce surcroît de travail compense un peu la perte subie pendant la morte saison.

Les statistiques de l'office du travail en 1896 donnent les chiffres suivants :

Sur un tableau qui concerne 900 ouvrières pris dans 4

ateliers, le salaire journalier oscille de 1½—à 6fr. Le salaire non pas moyen, mais rencontré dans beaucoup d'ateliers, est de 3 à 4fr. ; celui de 4fr. l'emporte dans les entreprises de haut luxe. Quant au chiffre de 6fr. à 6fr. 90 il doit être réservé à quelques ouvrières, qu'une limite imperceptible sépare de la classe privilégiée. Les nombres indiqués par le tableau des salaires restent au dessous de la vérité.

#### OUVRIÈRES 1<sup>re</sup> CATÉGORIE.

	Francs.
260 à 280 jours de travail . . . . .	1,040 à 1,120

#### 2<sup>e</sup> CATÉGORIE.

200 à 280 jours à 4francs . . . . .	800 à 920
„ „ „ à 3 „ . . . . .	600 à 690

#### OUVRIÈRES SUPPLÉMENTAIRES.

160 jours à 4francs . . . . .	640
„ „ „ à 3 „ . . . . .	480

Ces chiffres diffèrent peu des prix donnés par M. Charles Benoist, dans son enquête.

Le salaire de 3fr. à 4fr. par jour, doit être abaissé de 24 à 29 pour cent., pour obtenir le salaire réel, soit 2·13 ou 2·84 au minimum par jour.

Nous donnons le budget en détail d'une ouvrière vivant seule :

#### RECETTES.

45 semaines de travail, 7 semaines de chômage, les semaines les plus fortes sont en Septembre et Octobre, elles varient de 24fr. à 34fr., quelques unes à 10, 12 et 15fr., le total est de 935fr. pour l'année.

#### DÉPENSES.

Nourriture, restaurant philanthropique à 1·50fr. par jour, 365 jours—soit par an . . . . .	Francs. 550
Loyer d'une chambre . . . . .	150
Achat de linge . . . . .	20
Deux robes, faites par l'ouvrière . . . . .	50
Deux chapeaux . . . . .	15
Vêtements, chaussures, gants, divers, blanchissage . . . . .	65
Maladies, imprévus . . . . .	25
Condition pour admission dans les ateliers . . . . .	10
	<hr/> 885

Monsieur Gaston Worth, dans la brochure "La couture et la confection" nous apprend que l'industrie de la toilette et de l'habillement en France compte 81,406 patrons et 143,648 patronnes, soit 225,054 chefs de maison, ces patrons occupant 135,977 hommes et 564,824 femmes, soit en tout 700,801 personnes, ce qui fait que 925,855 personnes, vivent directement de cette profession. L'auteur estime à un milliard, ou un milliard soixante trois millions le chiffre annuel de l'industrie de la couture en France. Ces chiffres donnés en 1895 sont aujourd'hui beaucoup plus élevés

La lingerie occupe un grand nombre de femmes à Paris, c'est une des professions les moins rétribuée, les ouvriers, les couvents, les refuges, les communautés religieuses, font une concurrence très grande, et contribuent à la baisse de la main d'œuvre.

Une lingère habile peut gagner de 3fr. à 4fr. par jour, la lingère ordinaire, gagne 1.75 à 2.25, la lingère pour l'exportation de 1.25 à 1.50 par jour.

Les grands magasins donnent à des entrepreneuses qui distribuent le travail, en prélevant un gain; souvent l'ouvrière chez elle, travaillant du matin au soir, gagne 1fr. à 1.25 sur lequel il faut déduire la morte saison, ce qui remet sa journée de travail à 70—ou 75 centimes par jour; et il y en a qui gagnent encore moins!

Dans presque tous les ateliers, une salle est consacrée aux ouvrières pour la préparation de leurs repas, un fourneau à gaz est installé, elles peuvent ainsi déjeuner sur place.

En cas de veille, il est accordé vers six heures du soir vingt minutes pour le goûter. Un grand nombre de jeunes ouvrières habitent la banlieue ouest, Clichy, Asnières, Colombes, Courbevoie. Elles voyagent avec des cartes ouvrières, délivrées chaque semaine au prix de 1fr. pour l'aller et le retour.

Un congrès s'est tenu récemment. La question du travail des femmes était à l'ordre du jour. Les vœux suivants ont été adoptés:

La journée de travail de 8 heures, un maximum de 44 heures par semaine.

L'interdiction aux employeurs de donner aux ouvrières et employées du travail à faire chez elles lorsqu'elles ont fait le travail de la semaine. Le Congrès émit le vœu qu'il se crée des syndicats professionnels féminins.

Nous donnons l'organisation des Sociétés et Syndicats de Secours Mutuels fondés par l'initiative individuelle en faveur des ouvrières de l'aiguille.

“La Couturière” est la première Société de Secours Mutuels féminine, fondée en France ; elle offre à ses sociétaires de nombreux avantages, et possédait au 31 Dec<sup>bre</sup> dernier, un capital de 111.477fr. Elle a été approuvée par arrêt ministériel le 20 Octobre 1881.

La Société est présidée par M. Gaston Worth ; elle réunit près de 1500 membres, et vient de fonder une caisse de prêts gratuits au profit des adhérentes.

Le Syndicat de l'Aiguille a été fondé le 24 Avril 1892, conformément à la loi du 24 Mars 1884 sur les syndicats. C'est une association professionnelle mixte entre patronnes, employées et ouvrières du vêtement et de la couture. Son siège social est 342, rue St Honoré ; il y a près de 2000 adhérentes.

Le but de la corporation, est moral, professionnel, matériel.

Une commission de conciliation, formée d'une patronne, d'une employée, d'une ouvrière du conseil du syndical, présidée par un membre du comité consultatif, constitue le premier degré de juridiction, en cas de différends entre les membres de l'association. L'appel est porté devant un conseil d'arbitrage composé de trois membres du comité consultatif. Un bureau de contentieux tient à la disposition de tous ses conseils juridiques et commerciaux. Pour les employées et ouvrières, une caisse de prêts gratuits, au capital de 10,000fr., est à leur disposition, lorsqu'un accident, une maladie, un trop long chômage, a créé dans leur budget une gêne momentanée. Les syndicats professionnels ayant la personnalité civile, l'Aiguille a la libre disposition dans la limite de la loi, des cotisations, dons, legs qui peuvent lui être faits.

Une caisse d'assistance vient en aide aux plus malheureuses ; la caisse de famille, a recueilli et entretient deux orphelins. Une caisse d'encouragement aux Sociétés de Secours Mutuels vient d'être créé en faveur des ouvrières ayant cinq années de stage.

L'association n'accorde jamais un avantage quelconque, sans que l'associée ait elle-même de son côté fait un effort, afin d'habituer les ouvrières à l'idée de prévoyance.

Enfin deux maisons de famille ont été fondées, et sont appelées à rendre les plus grands services ; en plus de la nourriture, du logement, du chauffage, de l'éclairage, les jeunes ouvrières trouvent dans la maison la vie tranquille, la régularité, et souvent un refuge contre les fréquentations dangereuses. La mutualité maternelle, organisée par les maisons de couture, a été approuvée par arrêt ministériel du 24 Février 1892. Madame Carnot en avait accepté le patronage.

La mutualité maternelle a pour but de donner aux sociétaires



lorsqu'elles sont en couches, une indemnité pour qu'elles puissent s'abstenir de travailler pendant quatre semaines. En 1894, la mutualité maternelle a donné ses soins à plus de 300 ouvrières. Au siège social, rue d'Aboukir, sont annexés un dispensaire et une clinique. Toute ouvrière ou employée de nationalité française âgée de 16 ans, et travaillant depuis une année au moins à Paris, ou dans le département de la Seine dans une des industries suivantes, couture, confections, dentelles, broderies, mercerie, passementeries, qu'elle travaille dans un atelier ou chez elle, ou dans un magasin, peut faire partie de la société. Pour avoir droit à une indemnité, il faut que la participante soit inscrite depuis neuf mois, au moins, et ait payé la cotisation de l'année.

Nous avons résumé brièvement le salaire des femmes, qui travaillent dans la couture, ainsi qu'il est facile de se rendre compte par les statistiques publiées chaque année. Dans toutes les professions le gain de la femme est à de rares exceptions près insuffisant à la faire vivre.

Malheureusement la situation s'aggrave de plus en plus souvent par l'inconduite de l'homme qui dissipe une partie, ou la totalité de son gain. La femme mère de famille, dont la place est au foyer, ainsi que le disent ironiquement les mysogines, entourée de ses enfants mais sans pain quelque fois, sans abri, surchargée de besogne, se voit dans la nécessité de chercher du travail. Elle accepte des prix dérisoires, et se trouve par ce fait la concurrente des ouvrières dont elle fait baisser le salaire.

La situation sociale et économique devient de plus en plus difficile dans les pays civilisés ; les lois du travail sont modifiées par la présence de la femme à l'atelier. Certaines réformes s'imposent dans nos lois. Nous citerons les mesures les plus urgentes, qui ont été proposées et discutées dans les différents Congrès ; ces mesures passées dans nos lois, apporteraient une réelle amélioration.

1. Une forte éducation morale pour les hommes et pour les femmes.
2. La réglementation mieux entendue des lois du travail.
3. Des inspectrices du travail, en plus grand nombre et que leurs attributions soient plus étendues.
4. La protection contre la séduction des jeunes filles.
5. La recherche de la paternité.
6. La protection des femmes en couches, qu'elles soient rétribuées six semaines avant, six semaines après.
7. La réglementation des débits de boisson, et la vente des alcools par l'Etat

8. L'égalité absolue entre l'homme et la femme dans la vie civile et politique.
9. Bien que nous ne soyons pas partisans d'une réglementation excessive du travail, nous pensons que dans l'intérêt de l'humanité, on doit faire respecter le travail de l'ouvrière, et mettre en pratique—"A travail égal, salaire égal."

## Trades Unionism in Denmark.

Fru Nelly Hansen (Denmark).

NOWHERE are the working men better organised than in Denmark, even England not excepted. Every labourer has his union, and among the skilled labourers there are, so to speak, no non-union hands.

Agricultural labourers, domestic servants and shopmen only are not yet organised; but for the last few years the social democrats have been working with great energy—especially among the agricultural labourers—to make them enter the ranks. In spite of the splendid organisation of the working men, the total number of the members of the unions amount to about 70,000 only, or 3·4 per cent. of the population. The English trade unions have 1,600,000 members, or 4 per cent. of the population. This apparent superiority on the English side is more than accounted for by the fact of England being the first industrial manufacturing country of the world, whereas Denmark is an agricultural country whose industry is new and proportionately small—the industrial hands being proportionately much fewer in the latter than in the former, where non-union hands are to be found by thousands in nearly every trade.

The powerful strength of the Danish trade unions is due to the admirable centralisation which they have been able to carry through, joining the different unions of all trades into one powerful organisation. The trade unions are united into societies, embracing a separate trade each, and these trade societies are all centralised in the amalgamated trade societies (De samvirkende Fagporbund), which is part of the Social Democratic Labour Party.

The Danish trade unions are relatively new, the first having been formed in 1870, and their means are rather small. Nevertheless they have of late been able to carry through nearly every

contest between Labour and Capital, as long as they were limited to a single trade. This is due mainly to their centralisation, for in case of strike or lock-out the council of the amalgamated trade societies are authorised to levy on each working member a contribution up to 50 ore ( $6\frac{1}{2}$ d.) a week—a sum sufficient to support 3000 men for any length of time.

However, the employers of labour have learnt from the working men, and have formed the most powerful employers' organisation in existence.

They have long been preparing for striking a decisive blow at the trade unions, and on the 24th May this year they have declared a lock-out in all trades connected with the building trade and iron industries. They have thus deprived half the total number of Danish industrial workers of their means of existence, and at this very moment Denmark is engaged in a social war, the greatest, when everything is taken into consideration, that ever was waged anywhere.

The organised working women of Denmark, being fully aware that the struggle of the men is their own struggle, have imposed upon themselves a contribution for the benefit of the out-of-work men of 10 per cent. of their poor earnings, besides the sum the Council of the Amalgamated Trade Societies has imposed on all Danish trade unions. In fact, the women's trade unions all belong to this organisation, several of them even having renounced their independent organisations to join those of the men in the same trade, with whom they form common organisations. The number of organised working women in Denmark amounts to 11,000—viz., 2700 textile workers, 1500 tailoresses, 1500 cigarmakers, 300 bookbinders, 300 newspaper carriers, 250 shoemakers, 200 mantlemakers, 150 silversmiths, 150 linenmakers, 100 stay-makers, 2300 factory hands united in the Working Women's Federation (*Det kvindelige Arbejderforbund*), and, finally, about 2000 women belonging to different trades, and, as a rule, joining the unions of the men.

The first women's trade unions were formed in the middle of the eighties. The socialistic trade unions founded by the men at the beginning of the seventies were open to women too, but the women did not turn up. On the whole, the experience gained in Denmark is to the effect that if working women are to be united they will do so more easily when starting with unions of their own. That is what was done in 1883, 1884 and 1885, when women, working as cigarmakers, tailors and weavers, started their own trade unions, and the Working Women's Federation was

formed. The cigarmakers were then promised the same wages as the men for the same work, but this concession never existed save on paper, and was never realised till the women's organisation was strong enough to force it through. In the textile industry there was a difference in wages so long as hand-loom were used, but as they disappeared by and by, the wages of the men sank down to the same minimum as that of the women, and since then men and women have been working in common to raise them again. In 1891 the female cigarmakers and weavers, having worked up their unions so as to make them embrace the main part of the members of their trades, joined, after some negotiation, the organisations of the men. This co-operation has been to the benefit of both parts, and has led to great advantages. The working women of these two trades had, by means of their strong unions, reached further than the women anywhere else, so far as I have been able to ascertain, having obtained the same wages as the men of the trade. This fact getting abroad among the female workers of other trades, new organisations were started, one after the other, until, as already stated, the organised women comprise a number of 11,000 workers, or 16 per cent. of the total members of the trade unions. By way of comparison, it may be stated that, according to the last report of the Board of Trade, out of a total of 609,909 members of the English unions, 119,775, or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., only are women. We have had to pass through several strikes. The greatest one was that of the female tailors, taking place in January of this year, when 1500 working women were engaged; the strike was brought to a victorious end in the course of a fortnight. But far more frequent than the strikes are the cases where, through peaceful negotiations, and often in co-operation with the men, we succeeded in carrying through important increase of wages or improved conditions of work. The present great lock-out, too, is directly affecting the female unions, a certain number of women in the iron trade being locked out. But still larger is the number of women, both within and outside the organisations, concerned in this struggle; 20,000 wives and about 50,000 children are at this very moment suffering from hunger and misery in order to defend the Danish trade unions and the advantages they have gained through more than 20 years' hard struggles.

The average working hours in the Danish industry are nowhere beyond 10, in several cases less. Where work goes on for more than 10 hours, overtime is paid according to a higher rate. The rate of wages varies in a most remarkable way. The lowest

wages are paid for the "natural" work of women, as it is called, such as needlework; and other home industries, as the manufacturing of matchboxes, are underpaid to a still higher degree if possible. At that sort of work husband, wife and children, when toiling hard night and day, may gain 3 to 4 crowns (about 5s.) a week.

The highest wages are earned by the female cigarmakers and sorters, who gain from 20 to 25 crowns (22s. to 27s. 6d.) a week.

The results obtained by means of our trades unions have made Socialists of the Danish women. The female workers in a number of trades, such as the textile workers, cigarmakers and bundlers, compositors and brushmakers, have by force obtained economical parity with the men of the same trades, being paid at the same rate of wages. The question of the right to work in all trades like the men is never put, as far as our 11,000 organised working women are concerned; they have to work much more than they want to! Nor is the question about community of goods between husband and wife of any great interest to them, the workers having no fortunes about which to quarrel, and the same reasoning may be applied to the majority of the demands put forth by the modern women's emancipation movement. Equality with the man we *have*, and yet the married working women are leading a life of misery.

You will understand that, as far as they are concerned, no happiness can come into question under the actual social conditions that make unemployed out of the men, putting women and children into the factories in their places. There can be no family life when both husband and wife have to work 10 hours a day outside their home; nor can there be a human life to be led by the children till society understands its duty of giving the same education and breeding to the children of the poor as it gives to those of the rich.

A fact that has alienated the working women in Denmark from the so-called "emancipation movement" is the indication on the part of the champions of the women's cause to the effect that they would think it reasonable not to give the franchise to all women at a time, but to make a beginning with the female *tax-payers*, on the ground that the well-to-do women only may be considered politically roused.

The absurdity of considering the 11,000 *organised* working women less entitled to the franchise, only because they do not pay taxes, than the ladies of the *bourgeoisie*, whose interest in public matters is far behind in Denmark as compared with that

of the working women, is, of course, more conspicuous to the working class. It is sure to contribute a great deal to providing a division, resting on a class feeling, within the camp of the women, the female workers losing confidence in the *bourgeoise* lady leaders.

The lively partaking in the trade union movement has given the working women their own leaders belonging to their own circles. Over and over again they have to decline the unreasonable proposals and projects and good advice emanating from, no doubt, well-meaning, but entirely injudicious and unpractical, ladies outside the workers' world. Nor ought, perhaps, the working men and women to be surprised to find that these ladies are so *naïve* as to consider the people of their own station (the rich) as placed above the "stupid masses," reckoning, of course, the workers among the latter.

Howsoever this may be, the women's trades unions go on working quietly and steadfastly along the road that every day is leading to fresh results; now a penny more a day, now half an hour more leisure, and, before all, every day new members into the organisations. In several trades, and especially as far as the needlewomen are concerned, we are far off our goal indeed to be able to say, as the working *men* may in Denmark, that we are all members of our unions. But especially the last 5 or 6 years have carried us on at a double-quick pace. Our male fellow-workers have recognised the advantages of the organisation of the women, and we look to the future full of hope.

## Women's Trades Unions in Great Britain and Ireland.

Mrs Marland Brodie.

It would, I think, be impossible to conceive more helpless beings than the unorganised industrial women workers of to-day. Struggling as an individual to secure a living wage has ended in a hopeless failure.

In whichever direction we turn, wherever woman is employed, we find her a slave to the conditions by which she is surrounded,

and sacrificed on the altar of unrestricted competition. Ever the victim of the unscrupulous employer, she stands revealed before the world as an example and a proof of the utter powerlessness of women to secure by individual bargaining a living wage.

Trades unionism will help women to improve their condition, and by its aid will also enable them to rise to the wider responsibilities of sisterhood and citizenship which lie before them.

How to organise the women workers into trades unions is a problem, then, which deserves the serious consideration of all reformers, and its solution requires the help of all, both men and women, who labour for the betterment of the race.

In the brief space at my disposal I shall be able only to touch the fringe of this great question.

As organiser of the Women's Trades Union League, I have every facility for studying the industrial position of women and their relation to trades unionism.

I think the best way of conveying an idea of the movement, as I understand it, will be to show, as briefly as possible—

- (1.) What has been done.
- (2.) What is being done.
- (3.) What can be done.

At the outset, we all recognise that women generally have not had the same advantages of education as the men on this subject, and the men themselves are to blame in this matter. Indeed, most working women seem to regard trades unionism as a men's movement exclusively.

Many working women are destitute of ideals; they are "slaves to custom," and are slow to move out of their accustomed paths.

I have been working amongst the women pen-makers recently—an industry, by the way, where there is no foreign competition worth mentioning, and where the conditions are very bad. Indeed, the callous indifference and apathy of the women is appalling. This is an instance of what is to be encountered. At a large factory, where 1500 women are employed, after delivering handbills for 2 days in succession, and having personal conversation with them, I found about a dozen of them willing to come outside the factory for half an hour to hear what was being done for them, and a few more who came out of mere curiosity. This was in a district where we have been working for six months to establish a union of women.

With such apathy on the part of the majority, it will perhaps surprise many to learn that trades unionism is not *new* to women,

for to-day there are societies of 40 years' standing, and in splendid condition.

Such are the "mixed unions" of men and women all employed in the same trade, viz., the textile workers of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the Hosiery Federation, Boot and Shoe Operatives' Union, the Felt Hatters' Union, and the societies in connection with the Scottish Federal Union, comprising altogether something like 120,000 women.

Their success is owing in a large measure to the fact that their officers are *men* of shrewd, practical common sense, who are paid by the workers a weekly wage to enable them to devote the whole of their time to looking after their interests.

They have been instrumental in getting many advances in wages for the workers, and gaining many privileges in connection with legislation, such as amendments of the Factory and Workshop Acts, Truck Acts, Steaming Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, also in recovering wages and illegal deductions, settling disputes and claiming compensation in case of accidents, the drawing up of uniform price lists, and laying their claims before members of the House of Commons by deputations.

At one time, if the officials of these unions ventured near an office to lay their case before an employer, they were ordered off the premises and regarded as near neighbours of the criminal classes; to-day they receive the greatest courtesy.

In the cotton textile factories during the past 60 years wages have increased from 28 to 30 per cent. For example, in the cotton trade, in 1833, the wages of women in card-spinning were 9s. for one class of work; to-day they range from 16s. to 24s. per week.

In weaving four looms the wages were 12s. 6d., to-day they range from 16s. to 24s., whilst hours have been reduced 21½ per cent.

All the members of these unions, whether men or women, in Yorkshire, get equal pay for their labour wherever equal work is done.

Yorkshire workers, owing to the want of unity amongst the workers, have not yet been able to insist on equal wages for men and women, and at the present time the women's price is known as 25 per cent. lower than the men's. Since the seventies their wages have declined all round, and have gone down to such a degree within the past 15 years that a piece of cloth woven in 1883 for 46s. 6d. is to-day woven for 15s. 3d. Moreover, where women used to stand and work one loom, they now stand and



work two, at an increased rate of speed, for less wages than they formerly had for one loom. In the seventies the proportion of men in the trade to women averaged from 60 to 70 per cent.; but the scales are turned, and the women now form from 65 to 75 per cent. of those employed in the industry. Employers have been known to empty their factories of men three times in succession, and to take on women at reduced prices every time.

It is now no uncommon thing for a man to solicit work from an employer and to get the reply that there is none for him, but if he has a wife who can weave he may send her along. This in effect means that the woman becomes both the mother and the breadwinner.

There is no uniformity in prices in one district that I have visited. The difference is so great that for a class of work for which 25s. is paid, only nine miles away the same kind of work is done for 14s. This can only be improved by better organisation.

The wages of women in the Hosiery Federation range from 11s. to 20s. per week, and many men have been superseded by women in this industry. The wages of the Boot and Shoe Operatives' Union vary in different districts. In some places they range from 12s. to 16s. per week, whilst in others from 11s. to 13s., but many earn from 16s. to £1. Where the union is strongest the higher wage prevails.

The felt hat trimmers of Denton earn from 12s. to 20s., and in the good seasons I have known several women earn 25s. to 30s. per week; but in Stockport, where there are only about 70 in the union, the wages are considerably lower, say from 8s. to 15s.

The Scottish Federal Union covers the ground from Aberdeen to the Border Burghs. The wages of their workers range from 6s. to 18s. per week, but in some cases are higher than that, as in the tweed industry of the Border Burghs. The employers of the Border Burghs recently tried to enforce a reduction of 25 per cent., owing to not being able to compete with Yorkshire manufacturers, who pay lower wages. The result was that the union made a stand and won.

Amongst the mixed unions come the shop assistants, but the women do not obtain the same wages as the men for their labour. Many of them recognise the importance of organisation, and know that nothing else will help them, but stand aloof on the ground of "respectability." They are, however, making headway in their membership, and I congratulate them in closing up their ranks and appointing one of their women members as assistant secretary.

Then comes the Clerks' Union, which is taking every possible means to induce the women clerks to join and strive to obtain equal pay for equal work.

As to unions of women only, in Scotland we have the Textile Unions of Alva and Tillicoultry, which have done excellent work. In Belfast the Textile Workers' Union, composed of women alone, and officered by women, has fought many battles with success, with wages ranging from 6s. 9d. to 18s. They made a plucky fight at the time of the last amendment to the Truck Act, when all fines and deductions had to be posted up in the factories. The Belfast fines looked so bad that the girls struck against them, and won the day. Then we have the Bookbinders', a very old union, whose headquarters are in London, and one of the first formed by the W. T. U. League over 20 years ago, numbering about 300.

The tailoresses also of London have three branches, though their numbers do not increase, but that is accounted for by the low wages and long hours which they work. In London alone there are 30,000 tailoresses, 20,000 of whom are in the East End, and 10 per cent. always out of employment, whilst 60 per cent. to 70 per cent. earn less than 8s. per week. Then come the tailoresses of Leeds, Manchester and Glasgow, whose small unions have done capital work; but until the men and women of the same trade are cemented together in one trades union, the women of the said trade will not reap equal advantages with the men, and will always be used by the employers to displace the men and reduce their wages.

We have a brilliant little union in the matchmakers, and some branches of upholstresses, in Liverpool and Manchester. Then comes the women's printing and kindred trades union of more recent growth. During this last eighteen months the women pen-workers of Birmingham have fallen into line and are vigorously prosecuting their work.

Now, as to what is being done to extend the movement. Our work in this direction is largely educational in trying to inspire the women to set a value upon themselves, and to interest them by showing what has been done by the men and women in unions through collective bargaining.

At the present time there are four organisations at work, *i.e.*, The Women's Industrial Council, The Women's Trades Union League, The Glasgow Council for Women's Trades, The Manchester Women's Trades Union Council.

The reports of these four bodies are teeming with interest to

students of industrial questions affecting women. The Women's Trades Union League has been at work over twenty years, and its chief objects are organisation, legislation and social work.

On invitation from Affiliated Societies or Trades Councils the League sends organisers to any London or provincial district to form new or strengthen existing trades unions. It has a membership of over 30,000 women trades unionists. Complaints as to grievances and breaches of factory and public health legislation are investigated, over 100 of which have been dealt with last year.

Entertainments are arranged and clubs formed among working women, and the offices are a "House of Call" for women for purposes of inquiry, complaints and information. They have investigated and published returns in many trades, including jam factories, the use of yellow phosphorus in the manufacture of matches, the conditions of labour in the potteries; and a quarterly is published known as the *Women's Trades Union Review*, and in connection with the British Trades Union Congress an annual meeting is organised in the same town as the Congress is sitting.

The legislative work carried on by the League, through a large number of friends in the House of Commons, is a great feature of its activity, and the agitation which has resulted in the excellent report by the "Government expert" recommending "that the use of raw lead shall be abolished" is an indirect result of their continuous work upon this subject, extending over a period of nearly two years.

The Factory and Workshops Bill introduced by Mr Tennant, M.P., and drafted by Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., and Mr M'Kenna, M.P., embodies the League's immediate legislative proposals, among which are a change in the procedure by which special rules and regulations for dangerous employments are established.

It is proposed to abolish the present system of arbitration, and to empower the Secretary of State to make special rules and regulations by order, whenever, in his opinion, they are necessary for health or safety; also to abolish overtime, and to bring the hours within the supervision of the Factory Inspector.

The Women's Industrial Council was formed in 1894, and was in some degree a development of the Women's Trades Union Association, which for five years had been endeavouring to organise women chiefly in the East End of London. They have since then gone in for a good deal of educational work as a preliminary to successful organisation. The various departments

of the Council's activity are in the hands of special committees, each having its own secretary and its own sphere of action, subject only to the approval of the General Council.

The organ of the Council is published quarterly, known as the *Women's Industrial News*. They have published a bulky report of their investigation on home industries, and have, in connection with the Glasgow Council for women's trades, promoted a bill for the better regulation of home work, which is to be introduced by Mr John Burns, M.P.; and it is owing largely to their efforts that the return on "child labour" has recently been made, while a capital piece of work is the formation of the Association of Trained Charwomen. The Glasgow Council for Women's Trades is engaged in organising and educating working women, and has also published returns of investigation in all classes of home work. The Council has taken an energetic interest in the Scottish Trades Union Congress, also in federating the trades unions in Scotland, and among its objects we find a sincere desire to give reliable information concerning women's industrial work, so as to be a help to many social, philanthropic, political and educational movements.

The Manchester Women's Trades Union Council is doing excellent work in that vicinity; although its work does not extend outside Manchester, yet there is much scope in that city for its labours. Their organising work increases in the number of unions in the various trades, such as shirtmakers, boxmakers, bookbinders, tailoresses, and girls employed in indiarubber factories. Their work of investigation is published, and a fair list has been drawn up, indicating laundries where the workers are employed under satisfactory conditions. These four bodies are engaged in much valuable work, and I am sorry to add that they do not receive the support they deserve.

Now I turn to what can be done. In all our work it is encouraging to note that women workers on the whole are showing an increased interest in all these questions. Their attendance at organising meetings in many districts has improved wonderfully during the past ten years, and this has a most marked effect upon them; when they once become a little enlightened on the industrial subject, and with their interest gained, half the battle is won.

What we require now is an increase in educational workers, not so much for speaking at meetings as to go to the factories and have personal conversations with the girls and women, and explain to them how very necessary it is they should join and

remain firm to the union, no matter what the side issues are. None but those who have taken a part in this work know how hard and monotonous this grows; and unless one is bound up in the cause heart and soul, it would become a weary task indeed.

It is no uncommon thing for women at the factory gates to jostle you, to tear up the handbills and throw them in your face—a personal experience of my own almost every week in some districts. All these things we have to meet cheerfully, and to pity instead of blame, which shows that courage and faith are essential elements in the equipment of an organiser, and that the nature of the work demands also physical strength of a robust order. What we want now to carry the work forward, is the co-operation of all those who believe in a brighter future for women. The men trades unionists can help by inducing their women folk to become members of unions, and by helping to form unions in those trades where none exist. They could also get their unions to grant money for this purpose.

The churches might help by having a trades union Sunday collection, for surely such missionary work as ours ought to appeal to them, and it is time they turned their attention to the industrial heathen at home; but I must mention as notable exceptions the Rev. Stopford Brooke and the Rev. Canon Gore as among those who have helped us, and several of the clergy of Bristol, who at the last Trades Union Congress preached for our Lead Fund for aiding the victims of lead poisoning in the potteries. A fund on the same lines as the Industrial Indemnity Fund could be raised for the benefit of women who get discharged for joining unions.

Intimidation is still one of the fine arts that some of the noble captains of industry do not scruple to employ, and women always want to know what will happen if they get discharged for joining the union. If we were able to tell them their wages would be paid out of such a fund this fear would vanish. With a few notable exceptions the middle and upper class women have done nothing to help the working women in this way.

In America, during the war, I read of society women going out as nurses to succour the wounded soldiers on the battlefield. Do they ever think of the industrial war which is always going on, where the women are fighting on the fields of plenty for the scantiest subsistence? They sow, but others reap. Many there are wounded and killed in the struggle; ay, and thousands are driven to a fall worse than death. Is it not time that more of our rich women responded to the call of their poorer sisters? Can

they remain open to the reproach of always living useless lives while opportunities like these await them to remove it? But I look forward to *all* women joining in the work, for *all* women must rise together.

In conclusion I have only to add that Women's Trades Unions will have to be supplemented by legislative action. Without the help of the State woman can not secure that place in the Commonwealth that she ought to occupy on terms of perfect equality with man. In the meantime her watchwords must be, Educate, Agitate, Organise.

#### DISCUSSION.

**Mr Herbert Burrows** (London), in opening the discussion, disputed Mrs Robinson's contention that Protection was a help to Trade Unionism and Socialism detrimental to the independence of the workers. He held that the labour problem could not be solved except upon a Socialistic basis, and believed that Trade Unionism might be made a step in this direction. He wished that more members of the Congress would study those labour questions. As secretary of the Watchmakers' Union, which admits men and women equally to membership, he looked to the co-operation of men and women for the solution of the problems the Congress had met to consider. In answer to a question as to the organisation of capitalists against trade unions, he said he would not be surprised if at the outset of the struggle the capitalists won, but he had sufficient faith in the sturdiness of the operatives to think that in the end victory would rest with them.

**Miss Ashwell**, of the Manchester Women's Trades Union Council, said that the experience of the Council among the non-textile women workers of Manchester was that comparatively small bodies of women, possessed of such meagre funds as could be built up from a subscription of 2d. or 3d. per week, could, by careful negotiation with employers, gain definite improvements in wages, or at least avert reductions. In some quarters the objection was raised that trade unionism only helped the better-paid women who earned good wages. It was, let us remember, specially necessary that they should be helped. The temptation upon employers to level all women's wages down to the 10s to 12s. limit was very great, and the minority of women who earned higher rates greatly needed the safeguard of trade unionism. It was undoubtedly true that a certain proportion of

women workers were too poor and too downtrodden to avail themselves of trade unionism. If, however, we begin to draw lines and say trade unionism is no use for this or that group of workers, they would probably be false lines. She had seen unskilled women earning 8s. a week organised, and succeed in gaining an advance of wages.

The task of organising working women was difficult, but it was thoroughly practicable and urgently necessary.

**Fräulein Levetus** (Austria) followed with some account of trade unionism in Austria, where the women's unions are all organised in connection with the Social Democratic movement.

**Mlle. Drucker** (Holland) gave an account of similar societies in Holland.

**Mrs W. P. Byles** (Bradford) said that girls were often afraid of joining unions or giving information to inspectors, because their employers might dismiss them. An Indemnity Fund had been started in England, in connection with the Industrial Law Committee, to compensate them in proved cases of such injustice.

**Mrs Hicks** (Ropemakers' Union) said that intimidation on the part of the employers was so widespread that such a fund must assume colossal dimensions to cover it all. She was herself an active worker in trade unions, but it was very uphill work. The workers were often so poor, overworked, untrained, and their needs so great, that they could not afford to organise. They needed legislation to protect the workers, as trade unionism could not hold its own sufficiently.

**Miss Irwin**, of the Glasgow Council for Women's Trades, urged the value of trade unions for women as educational agencies. She said that as the trade union movement nowadays interests all great movements, it opens up a world of wider interests to the working woman than she would otherwise have. Trade unions also have an important function in imitating and promoting legislation.

**Miss Isabella Ford** (Leeds) gave some account of her experiences in organising trade unions, and spoke of the difficulty of getting the girls and women to band together effectually. She wished to impress upon those present that the present-day methods of philanthropy—mothers' meetings, girls' clubs, Sunday schools, etc.—as they are usually carried on, are dead against the spirit of trade unionism, and must be opposed by those who wish for the independence and elevation of the workers. She spoke with great indignation of employers she knew who, in their own factories, repressed every effort at self-help on the part of their

employees, and ground them down to the utmost, but who elsewhere, for instance, in Parliament, posed as enlightened friends of progress and of trade unionism. She held that trade unionism for women meant a much more radical and serious change in the entire condition of things for all the world than most people realised, and that it was a part of the great new movement going on, and as such full of hope.



## ETHICS OF WAGE EARNING.

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- (A) THE UNPAID SERVICES OF THE HOUSE-WIFE.
- (B) EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.
- (C) THE LIVING WAGE.
- (D) THE POCKET-MONEY WAGE.
- (E) LEGAL REGULATION OF WAGES.
- (F) ETHICS OF SPENDING.

LARGE HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

*FRIDAY, JUNE 30, EVENING.*

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The COUNTESS OF ABERDEEN in the Chair.

[This meeting was so overcrowded that it was deemed advisable to hold an overflow meeting in the Council Chamber upstairs, over which Mrs J. R. MacDonald, Convener of the Legislative and Industrial Section, presided, at which the speakers kindly read their papers a second time. This meeting was also overcrowded.]

## The Unpaid Services of the Housewife.

Mrs J. A. Hobson (Great Britain).

THE evils arising from the present absolute dependence of the wife, not only for her happiness or unhappiness, but often for

the barest subsistence, upon the generosity of her husband, are vividly realised by many thoughtful men and women. But these evils are too universal, too long-standing, and too deeply rooted in tradition and prejudice to obtain readily any very general recognition. The present state of things is taken for granted as right and proper, not merely by Church and State, but (and this is most discouraging of all) by the greater number of these overburdened women themselves.

In those few rare instances of true homes, uncorrupted by wealth, undegraded by poverty, where a spirit of rational and affectionate co-operation prevails, and where we have mirrored in miniature the organic, healthy activity of the ideal society, the housewife, as mainspring and organiser of the order which surrounds her, must needs find much to compensate her output of energy. The husband, recognising the value of his wife's work, recognises also her right to an equal share in the common purse. As a matter of fact, in many such homes no economic difficulty arises.

Our present concern is not with those who are the lucky partners of industrious and fair-minded men, but we have to consider whether, in the majority of cases, the present absolute control by the husband of the family income is conducive to domestic happiness and social good.

Before passing to the more obvious grievances of working-class wives, I should like to recognise briefly the large army of middle-class martyrs who are leading mediæval lives to-day, not only in the country homes of England, but in advanced America as well—those patient drudges in countless households, who are as dependant as little children upon the capricious doles of husband, father or brother. They, too, I claim, are unpaid housewives, in that it is insisted by this class of husband and father that they shall do a large amount of unremunerated domestic work even when he is quite able to pay them or someone else to do it. It is the petty tyrant of this kind who, by his niggardliness and generally insufferable views, is responsible for the wrecking of many women's lives; the well-to-do paterfamilias who keeps his womenkind short of 'bus fares and postage stamps, and who expects wheedling and gushing gratitude for every new dress.

When we turn to the working classes we find the same evil in an intenser form. With the poor woman it touches the very necessities of life. Not only—I am speaking now of the worst cases—does she toil by day and wake by night without any money

payment, but frequently goes on thus wearing her life away with a body half-starved, in the midst of blows, curses and drunken abuse. These are the wives of thoroughly bad husbands, but who, for sentimental or other reasons, are not willing to leave them and seek redress under the present maintenance law. Indeed, in many cases, where there is a large family and the husband is earning small and uncertain wages, it would practically mean that the alimony grant could not be collected, and that the wife would find herself compelled to undertake the entire support of herself and children. Aside from very bad working-class husbands, there is a large number of average men, the counterparts of the thoughtless and selfish among the rich, who are not ill-disposed, but who must have their beer and "baccy" as a first claim upon the wages, and after that are willing to be fairly generous in handing over the rest for family needs. But the important question is, what relation does the remainder, which is handed over, bear to the amount required to provide adequately for those needs? Is it sufficient, after meeting them, to leave any margin which the wife may regard as payment for her services? We must answer decidedly "No" in the majority of cases among low-skilled and agricultural labourers, while admitting the contrary in highly-skilled and organised trades. Such a margin is neither left nor expected by the average working housewife, she being content if able to feed and clothe her family and self (she usually comes *last*), and willing to work early and late if she sees things going well in the home. We all know many such poor, patient women—women who never sit down, who never complain, but who, from their ignorance and blunted sense of justice, are responsible for the ruin of many masculine characters, and who, by reason of this very patience and apathy, become millstones about the necks of their struggling sisters. Thus the poor woman either accepts the situation and becomes a more or less willing unpaid housewife, or she elects to do outside work for a pocket-money wage, neglecting her home, and lowering, by her unequal competition, the wages of other women entirely dependent upon their earnings.

To meet the case of the housewife several proposals have been made. It has been suggested that the State, recognising the social value of her work, should itself directly pay her for her services. While admitting this as a desirable ideal, we must dismiss it as only possible under a highly-developed socialism, and therefore beyond the pale of practical politics. Others would legally compel the husband to pay his wife at the current rate of

wages in the outside labour market. The slightest examination of this proposal, as applied to the working classes, brings us face to face with the root difficulty, and forces us to recognise it as *in a double sense* an economic one. For it is not only the wife who is economically dependent; the husband is so as well, owing (as we have seen) to the inadequacy of his earnings, even when carefully administered. Where the husband is receiving low-skilled or labourers' wages, it is obviously impossible that the best-disposed and most generous man should pay his wife even at the lowest rate of wages current among general servants, or that any legislation attempting to compel such payment could be enforced.

What, then, it may be asked, is the use of airing this vexed and complex question at all if we are met at every turn by a *cul-de-sac*? Casting aside Utopian dreams of the days when the world's work will be done by self-tending machinery, and when, for housewives as well as others, it will "be always afternoon," our own view is briefly this:—Family life, in a more or less modified form, will continue to exist, and the work of home-making and child nurture will continue to fall chiefly to the lot of women as being, under right conditions, best qualified to perform it. It is vitally important to the community that this work should be well done. What, then, is possible to improve the economic position of these home-workers, and to render such work attractive to the most competent women?

While we recognise too keenly the evils of competition in outside industry to wish for one moment to introduce the competitive spirit into the home, we are yet inclined to think that, as an interim policy, until right views more widely prevail, some legislation is desirable which should deal with cases of criminal selfishness and niggardliness among the well-to-do. This legislation would presumably be of the nature of a compulsory settlement upon wives, grown daughters, and other women relatives rendering unpaid services in the homes of such men.

In regard to the young couple who set up house on small means and precarious prospects, we would wish to see it a firmly-established custom that every Angelina, however romantic, should receive at marriage a contract bestowing upon her a certain allowance, to be based upon a reasonable proportion of her husband's future income.

But, it may well be urged, what about the many incompetent Angelinas—the extravagant, thriftless women who know about as much of housekeeping as of ploughing? Is poor, deluded Edwin

to be at the mercy of such a wife, and to see his substance wasted in a home that is none? I fear he must under present conditions. While the profession of home-keeping—that most complex of all professions, in which, to succeed, the woman must be, in her proper person, a number of specialists rolled into one—while this profession is among the very few where no training is deemed necessary, and which is entered without hesitation by the youngest and most ignorant, Angelina must work out her own salvation, even to the wasting of her share of the family income, and Edwin must wait as patiently as he can until she has learned to do better. But is it too much to hope that, in the near future, we may be enlightened enough to recognise the need of some special training for intending wives, and that the most sensible among our young women should be spurred by the pressing servant difficulties, if by no other motive, to lead the way in such a movement? In the case of the poorer girls, the need is even more urgent, and I see no inherent difficulty in State-established schools, where even six months' instruction in domestic management, cookery, housework, and, above all, hygiene, would do much to render the housewife's work more really valuable, and to raise the character of those squalid and miserable homes which the wife enters raw from the factory. In a word, we believe the training of the housewife to be an important step in the direction of her economic independence. If society is to sanction, either by law or custom, the payment of her services, it must have some guarantee that they are competently performed.

In regard to those cases where the husband is well-disposed, but where the income is inadequate for any regular allowance, it would appear a fair rule that he should at least share equally with her the amount at present dedicated to beer and tobacco. And it is well known that, even when in receipt of very low wages, he is often able to squeeze out a surprisingly large amount for these items.

Turning to the worst cases, it is undoubtedly true that the present maintenance law does act to some extent as a deterrent. At the same time, its influence must be discounted by the reluctance of many wives to avail themselves of it, and this reluctance can be always gauged and played upon by the man. With a view to placing still further restraint upon these matrimonial black sheep, we should advocate some extension of the present maintenance legislation in the direction of granting greater facilities to the wife in obtaining separate support, and in increasing the proportion of her husband's wages which she

would receive as alimony. This is all that the law can at present undertake with advantage. For the rest we must trust to educative rather than heroic remedies.

## The Unpaid Services of the Housewife.

Mrs Rutgers Hoitsema (Holland).

ALL *men* belonging to the different classes of society receive wages or salary, without being in the least affronted by it.

With *women* this is not the case. Women, though they all have a certain task to do, and though they very often work as hard as their husband and brothers, do not work for wages usually. Belonging to the upper classes they even would not like to accept any salary; they would be affronted by it.

Belonging to the working classes, though they would not be affronted by wage earning, women only work for wages if necessity urges them, in which case they ask payment for the work they do for others. But their services done in the family to which they belong are no more paid than the domestic services of the lady of title are.

For the origin of these ethics of wage earning we have to go back to very old times, when the world was not yet densely populated.

In those times none of the free men ever did any work for wages, nor might their wives and daughters do so. The ground was fertile enough, and with the aid of serfs and hirelings it produced all that was wanted.

Men and women both worked, each fulfilling different duties, but those who belonged to the class of the *free men* were never paid for their services.

It was considered humiliating to be paid for any work. *Paid work* was always *forced work*.

But since the Middle Ages things and customs and the way of producing have changed enormously.

As far as it refers to *men*, the idea that it is humiliating to do paid work is entirely gone. It is smiled away by the thirst to gain as much as possible. Formerly the more conquests the better without any scruples about the poor serfs.

Now, the more payment the better, without any solicitude about the poor working people.

But that old idea that it is humiliating to do paid work, however fatal it may be in its consequences, is still always in vogue with regard to the female sex. And yet it is nothing but a survival from the Middle Ages.

Hundreds of women will rather be in want of everything than humiliate themselves by working for money.

How inconsequent and ridiculous it may be in a world where money rules supreme. Whilst *men* have long since thrown away the prejudices of before, *women* still always go on refusing money, because they fear that the world may get to know how much they want it.

The poor creatures, they try to keep up appearances of wealth and at the same time they refuse proudly to accept wealth itself.

If we look at our social system still a little longer with a critical eye, we see, indeed, that the position of women in modern society does not differ so very much from that they had in the Middle Ages. Women are still always doing domestic work in the family to which they belong, and just as formerly without receiving any wages or salary for it. The services of a mother in a large family, of the mistress of the house, however difficult and tiring they may be sometimes, are never reduced to money. The housewife receives food and clothes, and she never thinks of asking a salary, nor of doing other more productive work.

The daughters follow their mother's example and do domestic work just as the daughters in Middle Ages did; they do passively what their hand finds to do, without claiming anything else but clothes and food and lodging.

It is not so very long ago—not quite a century—that the housewife's services were indispensable for domestic life and domestic happiness, that women had a great economic value. The housewife herself had either an active part in all sort of operations, or she had to superintend the work that was done by her daughters and servants.

In that time the production of food and clothes and drink and of different materials for daily use was in the hand of each family separately.

At present all those things are made mechanically wholesale in immense factories and workshops, and this change in the production has had an enormous influence on domestic life.

In the first place, the housewife has lost by it the greater

part of her productive work. In the second place, a great many things which were formerly produced at home have now to be paid for. Consequently a family cannot prosper so much as it did before, because its production has diminished and its consumption has increased.

. You see there is something wrong in our households now.

What can we do to make things go all right again?

Will it help us if we get the housewife's services paid, without anything else?

I cannot see the use of it.

Each family representing an economical unity, it is quite natural that the members belonging to that unity, if doing productive work in benefit of it, do not think of asking payment, because they all do it for their own sake. They all profit by their own work, never mind whether they are producing indispensable things or saving payment by doing work that is unavoidable.

For the same reason, married people who keep up a shop together, if they are both working in the way they consider the most profitable, doing each the work that they are best fit for, or if they have a trade or a farm or a kitchen garden together, they will never think of paying each other for their respective services.

They merely consider the gain or the loss as their common possession, or as a common loss.

So it was, and so it is, with the housewife's services. Paying her would be of no use, because she is part of the family, part of the economical unity for which she is working. Her wages would not make her family a bit richer, because they had to be booked as family expenses also.

The puzzling problem we have to solve is, as far as I can see, *not* how to get the housewife's services paid, but how to relieve her from the burden to be obliged to do unproductive work. We must procure to the housewife useful and productive lines to work in. We must try to arrange things so that just as formerly she can be a faithful wife to her husband, a careful mother to her children, and yet do that sort of work which agrees with her mind, with her talents, with her capacities, and which at the same time enables her to increase the prosperity and happiness of her family.

Now that domestic service has lost a great deal of its economical value, it is indeed very silly to expect women to go on doing domestic work and nothing else, and yet a great many stick to



the old system because they consider housekeeping inseparable from married women.

But this is a capital mistake, and too long already women and society have been victims of it.

One of the direct consequences of women doing valueless services is this, that *men* are considered to be the breadwinners, and that *women* are considered to be provided for.

And the indirect consequences of our sticking to the old system are indeed numerous.

With a clear conscience men take the best professions, the well-paid places, the well-paid work for themselves, and leave the ill-paid work to women.

With the greatest resignation most of our women suffer that their own special work, as housekeeping, washing, sewing, etc., if done for others, is so badly paid that it is hardly sufficient to keep one in life.

Another consequence of it is the difference in education given to boys and girls, which has again an enormous influence on the character of both sexes. Girls are never urged to work or to study very hard. They never learn to wish for independence and self-reliance. "Men have to be independent," that is what a girl hears from her early youth. "Men are breadwinners, women are not." Men have to provide for wife and children, their work must be beautifully paid, and so on.

These and other suggestions have also made of this inequity the most natural and righteous thing of the world; that *equal* work is *not* equally paid. Well, then, it is my strong conviction that subjection of women and independence of men only will remain the base of our education, the base of our laws, the base of our social system as long as women go on considering housekeeping as their own special work more than anything else.

Housekeeping, of course, practised as a profession, done in large establishments for different families, has a great economical value, and will always be well paid.

Housekeeping, however, considered as the unavoidable task of every married woman, done only for one family, will always be of very little economical value, and never fail to also depreciate all the occupations done by women, because it includes the continuation of the obsolete system—a system which I call a survival from the past period when mechanical wholesale production was unknown.

But new times are coming, and a new social system is emerging from the old.

Women wish to be independent and to do valuable work again, and so they claim for the female sex the admission to all sort of professions and dignities.

And no doubt they will gradually win their way if we go on saying that boys and girls must be equally provided with practical and theoretical knowledge, if we keep on insisting that every girl has to choose a profession and to practice it if ready; that every girl has to be trained for it; that every woman has to provide for her own living; that the women's services have to be paid so well that every woman will be able to procure her contingent of the family expenses, just as she formerly did by her domestic services.

We all must try to promote the idea that housekeeping is a profession, that it does not belong more to domestic life than shopkeeping or hairdressing; that married women may occupy any profession and follow any trade as well as housekeeping; that married people do not want to have a large or even a small house of their own with their own furniture, their own servants, their own housekeeping; that a luxurious home does not make women's happiness, but that they all feel the necessity of doing useful, suitable work again—work which enables them to be as indispensable for domestic life and domestic prosperity as they were before the period of steam and electricity.

## Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Mrs Charlotte Perkins Stetson (U.S.A.).

You will perhaps sooner see my point of view if I reverse these titles and speak of the Ethics of Wage Paying, and Equal Work for Equal Pay.

Ethics is the science of conduct. We study physical laws to find out how the material world works. We study ethical laws to find out how the social world works.

Ethics is the physics of society.

The individual acts, but the ethics of his actions lies in it relation to other people.

An absolutely and permanently isolated man can do neither

right nor wrong, save in regard to his own health and comfort. Good or bad as applied to conduct is a purely social concept.

Conduct is relative to purpose.

We do well or ill according to what it is we are trying to do. And as society is visibly evolving in a certain direction, conduct is to be measured as it helps or hinders that social progress.

Society, like every living organism, depends primarily on economic processes for its maintenance and development.

These economic processes are in the hands of conscious individuals, whose conduct has immense effect upon the well or ill fame of society, and this brings us directly to the real head of this subject—the Ethics of Economics.

As the economic processes of society are for its best maintenance and development, it is comparatively easy to establish an ethical standard, and to say that such and such an economic process is good or bad according to its effect on society. And as society is composed of individuals, any economic process which injures and degrades the individual must react injuriously upon society, and is therefore wrong.

Sometimes one or more individuals must be temporarily sacrificed for the social good, and history is full of instances of this sacrifice cheerfully given, from the heroes of the battlefield to the heroes of the strike.

This is right, but if the sacrifice is too general and continuous, and the individuals concerned too numerous, then it becomes wrong.

Our system of wage earning is in its very name an evil thing.

It sets a man here in the world with the purpose of getting all he can out of it, whereas he is here to put all he can into it; and if he does not put in more than he takes out he might as well be dead.

To enter upon any economic relation for personal profit is wrong, whether from the large greed for millions or the small greed for pence; as a matter of ethics the attitude is wrong, because work is really done for the benefit of society, and the desire of the worker should be to confer the most benefit.

Therefore the true ethics of wage earning is to do as much and as well as one can, to be sure and earn one's wage.

On the other hand, if we consider the ethics of wage paying we find quite a different view point.

Here is the employer, a factor in modern society, whose function it is to co-ordinate labour and to distribute wealth. He should therefore strive to so organise labour as to produce the

most wealth with the least expenditure of time and strength, and to so distribute the wealth thus produced as to most profit the most individuals—that is, to best serve society.

This he emphatically does not do. He so organises labour as to produce wealth with the least expenditure of his own capital, and seeks by no means to distribute that wealth, but to segregate it to his own private use, which is gross social sin.

In his position the ethics of wage paying should be his study, and in studying it he would find opportunity for great social usefulness and virtue.

From the usual point of view, that of the wage earner, or of the theorist on wage earning, the effort at adjustment consists in the determined attempt of the producer to secure to himself "the product of his labour"—a social absurdity. A human creature easily produces far more than he consumes; and, moreover, what he wants to consume is not his own product, but an immeasurable share in the products of other people. To grudgingly produce and greedily consume retards social progress.

Again, if the employer, grown ethically enthusiastic, seeks to pay each man according to his individual merits, he finds himself involved in ever-deepening intricacies, as our products become more and more co-ordinate; and it is this difficulty in adjustment which has forced him to the utterly absurd position of treating labour as a commodity, and as dear or cheap according to "supply and demand."

The wage system is as much a makeshift, temporary, and self-destructive system, as was the feudal, the chattel slavery, or any other of our progressive steps in economic adjustment, and is also as essential and natural a step as were any of these in their time. As a system its ethics really consist in a generous production on the part of the worker, and a generous distribution on the part of the employer—an ethics little understood.

As a minor branch the woman's demand for equal pay for equal work resolves itself clearly into a large determination to do equal work for equal pay; not merely equal skill and industry of a given individual for a given time, but an equal grade of permanent competence and organisation. The wages of men have been raised and regulated by organised effort, and the wages of women are open to the same influence.

There is, moreover, a special duty laid upon women to raise the standard of their work and organise more solidly, not only for their own sakes, but because of the relation their labour bears to man's—to the labour of the whole world. Woman as an inde-

pendent economic factor in society is growing more numerous and important daily, and in the present stage of industrial warfare she bears many disabilities. Not belligerent by nature and by heredity and environment, accustomed only to limited efforts for limited ends, used at once to a soft selfishness and a continual self-effacement, she is slow to recognise large social claims.

The self-interest of the employer, grinding down in dead weight upon labour, falls heaviest upon her, as what has least resistance, and her own self-interest is so purely personal that she is slow to take her place in the ranks of organised self-defence. Economists quite fail to observe the effect upon industrial evolution of this vast body of workers, who occupy so peculiar a place in society. Productive industry is the prerogative of woman; she was the first labourer in those lines of peaceful diligence on which our civilisation grows; but while men have passed through various stages of economic relationship, she has remained in the primitive relation of sex ownership, working alone for her immediate family, a prehistoric survival of the earliest form of labour, acting as a check to all industrial progress. She feels personally the injustice of being paid less than a man for the same work, but that personal injury does not fully convince her that it is one common to her class, and only to be removed by combination.

But while even men, with their centuries of economic experience behind them, are still so slow to grasp these great principles, we must be patient with the differently reared women, and rather note how wonderfully they have done some things, than how naturally they have failed to do others. And above all we should hail her entrance upon economic independence and social relation as bringing the largest hope of social progress. Her long restriction to solitary and personal labour has been the continued renewal of our narrow and shortsighted self-interest; all men being born of women, and all women, speaking roughly, being confined to a narrow individualism. The point to be considered now is, not that she brings to the field of organised labour the primitive selfishness of her previous isolation, but that in leaving that isolation for ever, the last stronghold of individualism gives way, and the sense of union, of inter-dependence, of mutual love and honour, will grow among us as it has never grown before.

How can we expect women to rise at once to an organised demand for equal pay for equal work, when heretofore they have been perforce content with doing all the work of which they were

capable for no pay at all. The habit of working for nothing, alone, because one must, does not develop a far-seeing, self-respecting co-operative independence! I speak of those women who work at home, unpaid, unrecognised, but still labourers, and who contribute to the world the habit of submissive industry, asking nothing for itself, and caring nothing for its neighbours. Their influence, direct and transmitted, is one strong force in retarding industrial development.

How much worse is the influence of that class of women, all too large, who do not work even for their own families, even for themselves! Who are content to be served by the labour of others, and to contribute nothing of their own to the world's wealth! If they are incapable of any form of labour, they should be placed in asylums, where they could be maintained at less expense to those who do work. If they are capable of any form of labour, and yet fail to perform it, that is an offence against the whole working world, an offence which the public spirit of a later age will scorn and punish as it deserves. The unconscious animal-like innocence with which women who "do not have to work" live on the labour of others, consuming all they can reach, producing nothing, is another strong retarding influence upon social progress. For these women are loved and admired, they are influential in that peculiar body of extra-social or sub-social spectators we so paradoxically call "society," and worst of all, they are mothers! So is bred into the race the scorn of labour and the greed of gain; and in men as well as women is born the desire to get without giving.

The position of economic independence which is opening to women to-day is not merely an opportunity to "earn one's living," it is the bringing forward of the last great detachment of primitive individualism into the wise and loving mutualism which is our true order. In this demand for equal pay, women will at last learn to stand together, to love each other, to become socialised as well as domesticated, and when women learn this lesson they will teach it and transmit it to their children—it will become the easy habit of the world.

## Equal Pay for Equal Work in Switzerland.

Madame Ryff (Switzerland).

Les services publics accessibles aux personnes des deux sexes et soumis à la Législation de la Confédération ou à celle des cantons, sont les suivants :—

L'administration des postes,  
„ „ télégraphes,  
„ „ téléphones.

Et dans les différents cantons l'enseignement public.

Nous examinerons successivement les conditions d'emploi dans ces différentes catégories.

### L'ORDONNANCE FÉDÉRALE CONCERNANT L'INSTITUTION, L'EXAMEN, ET L'EMPLOI DES ASPIRANTS POSTAUX.

L'Administration des Postes admet, suivant les besoins, au commencement de l'année, un nombre d'apprentis que fixe la Direction générale des postes ; sans autorisation spéciale de cette dernière, il est formellement interdit aux offices de postes, de recevoir des apprentis particuliers.

Afin de permettre aux personnes, qui en ont l'intention, de se mettre sur les rangs, la Direction fait une publication, avec délai d'inscription, par la Feuille fédérale et d'un ordre de service communiqué à la presse.

A moins d'une autorisation formelle de la Direction, on n'admet pas comme apprentis les personnes âgées de moins de 16 ans ou de plus de 25 ans ; sont, en outre, exclues de l'admission les personnes dont la constitution physique pourrait les rendre impropres au service postal ou dont l'état de santé laisse à désirer. Les myopes et les personnes à l'oreille dure tombent aussi sous le coup de cette exclusion. Les places d'apprentis sont aussi accessibles aux personnes du sexe féminin, en tant qu'il y a occasion d'employer ces dernières utilement.

Les Directeurs d'arrondissement prendront des informations

précises sur le caractère, l'intelligence et la constitution physique de chaque candidat. L'examen d'admission doit prouver que les candidats possèdent un certain degré d'instruction générale. On exige en outre une bonne écriture, de l'habileté dans le calcul, la connaissance de la géographie politique et d'au moins deux langues nationales. Après avoir pris connaissance du résultat des examens, la Direction fait le choix des apprentis à admettre ; après l'admission les apprentis sont répartis par la Direction entre les divers bureaux les mieux placés pour les recevoir et les instruire dans le service postal. Les apprentis reçoivent de la Caisse postale une indemnité de fr.1.50 par jour pour les premiers 3 mois, 2fr. pour les 9 mois ultérieurs, et 3fr. pour le reste de l'apprentissage.

A l'expiration de l'apprentissage, un examen a lieu, pour l'obtention du brevet, auquel *tous* les apprentis ont le droit de se présenter. Il y a des brevets de I<sup>e</sup>, II<sup>e</sup> et III<sup>e</sup> classe, selon que les examens sont bons, ou satisfaisants, ou passables.

Les porteurs de brevets de III<sup>e</sup> classe sont employés de la même manière que les aspirants ayant un brevet d'une classe plus élevée mais seulement en tant que l'administration a pour eux une occupation convenable ; ils peuvent, en tout temps, être mis à disposition. Le fait d'avoir terminé l'apprentissage et subi avec succès l'examen pour le brevet ne donne pas un droit absolu à une place définitive dans le service postal.

L'effectif total du personnel postal à poste fixe était à la fin de 1898 de environ 9000 fonctionnaires et employés, dont plus d'un millier, c. à d. la neuvième partie, du sexe féminin.

Les traitements des fonctionnaires ou employés de l'Administration des postes sont conformes à la loi fédérale du 2 Juillet 1897 et s'appliquent indistinctement aux titulaires qu'ils concernent.

#### ORDONNANCE FÉDÉRALE CONCERNANT L'ADMISSION ET L'EMPLOI D'AIDES FÉMININS DANS LES SERVICES TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE ET TÉLÉPHONIQUE.

Il sera formé, dans la mesure du besoin, pour les bureaux télégraphiques et stations téléphoniques centrales de I<sup>e</sup> et II<sup>e</sup> classe des aides télégraphistes provisoires et des téléphonistes auxiliaires du sexe féminin, appelées à remplacer les fonctionnaires en congé ou malades, ou à seconder le personnel en cas d'augmentation passagère du trafic ; l'appel au service et le licenciement des



aides télégraphistes et téléphonistes auxiliaires se règle d'après l'état du personnel et l'importance du trafic ; celles qui auront montré le plus d'aptitudes, d'habileté et d'exactitude seront appelées les premières au service et licenciées en dernier lieu.

Les aides télégraphistes et téléphonistes auxiliaires peuvent être appelées au service par journées entières ou par demi-journées. Leur traitement est de fr.4.50, soit fr.2.25 si elles peuvent coopérer aux deux services ; les téléphonistes auxiliaires reçoivent fr.3.50 soit fr.1.75 par journée ou demi-journée. Après plusieurs années une paie journalière de fr.5, peut être accordée aux aides télégraphistes qui travaillent habilement et prennent à l'oreille les télégrammes arrivants.

Comme au Service postal, dans celui du télégraphe et des téléphones il y a égalité de traitements parmi les fonctionnaires et employés fédéraux des deux sexes, mais inégalité dans le chiffre des fonctionnaires et d'employés.

#### FONCTIONNAIRES DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT PUBLIC.

L'art. 27 de la constitution fédérale laisse aux cantons le soin de l'enseignement public ; seule l'École polytechnique à Zürich est une création de la Confédération ; mais un certain nombre d'établissements d'instruction publique supérieure, sont subventionnés par la Confédération.

Il serait difficile d'établir une comparaison équitable quant aux traitements et obligations existants entre instituteurs et institutrices en Suisse ; dans les degrés inférieurs de l'école populaire leur position est à peu près la même pour la plupart des cantons ; mais une différence s'établit et s'accroît en montant les degrés des écoles moyennes et supérieures ; cette différence est à l'avantage des instituteurs c. à d. des hommes dont cependant les études préparatoires et les examens d'admission sont égaux à ceux des institutrices, sauf pour quelques branches spéciales ; les institutrices trouvent généralement moins de facilités d'emploi et leur traitement reste au dessous de celui des instituteurs du même niveau ; la différence peut être évaluée à la proportion de 2 à 3.

D'après le recensement de 1894 il y a en Suisse environ 8000 écoles primaires dans lesquelles environ 6000 instituteurs et 3000 institutrices donnent l'enseignement à 236,857 garçons et 234,866 filles ; les écoles secondaires sont au nombre de 486, avec 18,451 garçons et 14,121 filles, qui reçoivent leur instruction de 1281 instituteurs et 189 institutrices ; 1049 écoles complé-

mentaires obligatoires sont fréquentées par 16,946 jeunes gens et 186 jeunes filles, ces dernières en Obwalden ; les écoles complémentaires facultatives comptaient environ 16,000 jeunes gens et 3551 jeunes filles dans 565 établissements ; à peu d'exceptions près, l'enseignement dans ces écoles complémentaires est donné par des instituteurs.

Pour résumer il y a donc en Suisse un commencement de "equal pay for equal work" de par l'Etat, mais ce n'est qu'un commencement dont l'exemple n'a pas même encore été suivi par les cantons dans les écoles publiques et il reste bien à faire chez nous en Suisse pour voir entrer dans nos moeurs le grand principe de payer le travail à sa juste valeur indépendamment de la personne qui l'accomplit.

## The Living Wage.

Mr J. R. MacDonald.

I FEAR I must confess at once that I am to speak to you to-night upon a subject which I cannot define in cash. No one can fix absolutely what a "living" wage is. There is no disputing but that, say, ten shillings a week is not a living wage. But is a pound, is thirty shillings, is two pounds? What is the difference between a living wage in London and a living wage in Manchester, and again a living wage in a remote rural district? What is the difference between a living wage for a dock labourer, a clerk, a clergyman? Between a trade and a profession? I must say I give up those conundrums. I am as much interested in them as I am in the old problem in scholastic wisdom of how many angels can stand upon the point of a needle. They are raised and seriously discussed only by those who have lost all practical sense, and who imagine that the niceties of dialectic can satisfy human needs.

Until you can define life, until you can measure out in a balance, as you do tea and sugar, the quantities and qualities of human desire and aspiration, the term "living wage" will imply an ethical standard rather than a money value.

It may seem from this that I am giving away the case in favour of the retention of the phrase, "living wage," in the vocabulary of social economics. But I have no intention of doing anything of the kind. We are to-night talking of "mini-

mum," "pocket-money," "fair," and other descriptions of wages ; and though those adjectives all indicate important aspects of the wages' problem, none of them tell us by what a proper wage is to be measured.

When we ask what ethical principle should guide us in the payment of wages, when we feel the insufficiency of merely criticising other people's views, and attempt to express our own, we must employ, not the words "minimum" wage or any such term, but that of "living" wage. That brings us to the root of the whole matter—namely, that men work to live, and that the value of their wages must be measured by the life they make possible for the worker.

There are two main ideas implied in this expression which I should like to emphasise here. The standard of life is constantly changing—constantly rising in a progressive community. New satisfactions create new needs, and consequently no argument is more futile in the criticism of social movements than that we are more comfortable than our grandfathers, and that contentment with our blessings should therefore make us dumb. Consequently, what is a living wage to-day may be below that standard to-morrow. We are apt to be confused by this movement of progressive society. Now, if we are anxious to secure a solid footing in those shifting sands of outward circumstance—as we all must be—we must employ language which directs our thought to the fixed centre of all the change, man himself—man with his inalienable ethical rights. In the relations of industry those rights are that he be not merely used for another man's economic ends, but that his labour should be rewarded by putting within his reach those advantages and opportunities which are necessary for the spending of a life full in its intellectual, moral and spiritual experiences. The "living" wage is, in short, an economic expression of that precept which has become an axiom in all sound ethical teaching, that every man should be treated as an end in himself. It is a declaration that coin has no meaning and no value except in relation to the life wants of the people who have it. That is the ethical idea latent in this expression.

Then there is the economic idea that wages should be a first charge upon industry. This is not new. It has been part—whether consciously or not is of no matter—of trade-union economics from the beginning ; it has been the practice of the philanthropic master since he came into existence. Through some centuries of less complicated industrial organisation than now exists, it was the basis of the labour laws of the land. But

to us its importance is that in relation to our own circumstances it is being formulated into a working principle. It denies the justice of treating wages as though they were uncertain elements in the cost of production, high to-day and low to-morrow, obedient to the anarchistic conditions of a disorganised labour market. It denies the right of the employer to speculate on his power to reduce his wages bills by say 10 per cent. without consulting his workmen, to make up his estimates on that assumption, and in a month or two afterwards describe himself as the victim of a falling market and appeal to his men—and to the public if his men will not follow him—to help him out of his difficulty. It regards the worker as a co-partner entitled to life and not merely wage for his work, and insists upon that fact being recognised in all wage-bargaining between employer and employed.

My remarks may appear to be rather general, but I do not know that any better service can be done for the industrial side of the "women's movement" than to insist upon a sound theoretic view of wages, based upon the idea that wages are not simply the value of the thing man to an employer, but the claim of the person man to a just share of life in return for an honest share of work. The wages of women are regulated by everything or anything except a standard of life. Even the best of masters and the least old-fashioned of people constantly find themselves assuming that the work of women is temporary, is a matter of convenience, is supplementary, and, in consequence, we find it less easy to apply to women's wages the standard which we apply to men's. It is believed that it is men's wages only that keep up the standard of life, and that it is just to pay women what they will take. But, to begin with, it is by no means generally true that the woman wage earner has no responsibilities. She is working, as a rule, because she has to keep herself or her children, or because she has to help to keep her family; and it is as important for everybody concerned that the young unmarried woman should have as high a standard of living and as firm a sense of independence in her work as the young unmarried man; that the children of the widow should be in as comfortable circumstances as the children whose father has been spared to them. Then, let me remind you of this. When we hear of women being inefficient workpeople, and being fit only for the less highly-paid jobs, we fall into error if we argue that therefore their wages should be kept low. Low wages are to a very great extent the cause, and not the result, of inefficient work. A very interesting confirmation of this view has just come under my notice. The

Woman's Industrial Council of London and the Woman's Council of Glasgow have been engaged in investigating home industries, and one of the unexpected results of their inquiries has been to prove that the best-paid work and the work of best quality is done by married women whose home conditions are most comfortable, and whose standard of life is fairly high. Again, can a high general standard of living be maintained while women are paid low wages? I do not believe it can. It is an interesting fact that in the average working-class home the wife lives at a lower standard than the husband. This leads directly to many of those unpleasant features of domestic life which social reformers with so much ineffective effort are trying to remedy, and it results in lowering the physical and moral vitality of the children. The strength of the chain is the strength of its weakest link; and to imagine that we may neglect the position of women in raising the general average of the standard of living is sheer blind folly. If we pay women wages which we know would not be sufficient for men, two results will be certain—we shall depress the standard of life of over half the population (both before and after marriage), and we shall lower men's standards at those points in industry where men and women compete on an equal footing. Both of these are incompatible with a high standard all round.

Hence, however greatly the "living-wage" standard may vary between trade and trade, and trade and profession, we must set our faces with determination against every idea that it should vary between men and women, as such. Time and circumstance must be taken into account; sex must not. Those who seek for universal remedies are doomed to disappointment. Few great evils spring from simple causes. But if the women workers had to confine their energies to any one question, they could select none of more far-reaching importance to themselves and society than the raising of their standard of living and the demanding of a proper reward for their labour. To make that aim clear to the public in a word, and to keep that purpose always before themselves, they could not employ a phrase more pregnant with idea and more luminous with accurate thought than that whose use I have been defending to-night.

## The Pocket-Money Wage.

Miss March-Phillipps (Great Britain).

"SHE works for a pocket-money wage." This is rather a condemnatory term. What does it mean? Some would say that it means merely working for money to spend on superfluities when one is already supplied with necessities. It is rather surprising that there still are to be found persons illiberal and illogical enough to condemn this. To condemn it *in women* that is to say, for no one says of a man that he is to blame for adding to an already apparently sufficient income. It is illiberal because pleasure and superfluities are a very important ingredient in life, whether it be the dress allowance supplemented, or foreign travel, the power of cultivating talent or buying books, or giving presents, and no one can pronounce as to what is a "sufficient" income for another. Indeed, the very people who write most strongly against women working for money unless they are in need, generally, I find, have a modest competence to begin with, and are making a good income by writing. It is most illogical, because while they would condemn a woman with a hundred or two a year to remain *in statu quo*, they have nothing to say against a penniless girl entering a profession and ending, perhaps, by earning thousands. I have only touched on that aspect of the question.

What we mean when we speak of a pocket-money wage is that it is a wage only accepted because the worker has other means upon which to rely, and we condemn it when it is an inadequate compensation for time and pain bestowed, and one which the worker could not afford to take if she had to live upon it. It is a *bounty-fed* or *subsidised* wage, to put it accurately. There is no sting in the accusation, "She works for pocket money." "She works for a pocket-money wage" is as much as to say, "She works for a bounty-fed wage." That is the true accusation.

There seem three reasons why a woman accepts this wage:—

1. From thoughtlessness or ignorance. Liking work, able to do it well, either not caring much about pay, or not understanding that if she tried she could command higher remuneration, she undersells the market and cheapens the standard of work, very often actually

thinking she is doing a good thing and behaving generously.

2. Comes she who accepts a low wage because she can only give inferior work, and it is all her work is worth. She belongs to a very large class, and though there is a demand for cheap, poor work the supply is always greater, and this section is always overcrowded.
3. Those who take low pay because the employment carries certain compensating advantages, such as the girl who advertises for typewriting at 9d. a 1000 because she likes to work at home; or the one who goes into a tea-shop or restaurant of one of the large companies, where, though the pay is low, the life offers variety and excitement; or the journalist, who comes back after marriage and takes a low salary, because she is dull at home, and enjoys the bustle and stir of an office.

To the first class we may, with some hope, point out the fallacy and mistake of taking low wages, and also urge that anyone who wishes to work without return can nowadays find any amount of valuable unpaid work waiting for them, which can be done without risk of injury to anyone.

There is nothing to be said to the woman in class 2, as long as she remains in it. Bad work means bad pay, and you can never expect bad work to command high wages.

What can we say to No. 3, who tells us that the low wages are made up to her in a congenial occupation, and that if she stands aside a dozen will rush in to fill her post? If her work is good—as, for instance, cheap typing at home often is—the chances are she could, with a little more trouble, get a higher price. Women often lose money merely because they have not the courage or the judgment to stand out.

Then let me remind equally class 2 and 3, that of all people the bounty-fed are the last that should be satisfied with badly done and badly paid employment. It is while you have some support at your back that you should be choosing and fitting yourself for employment that is not badly paid. Leave the taking of ill-paid work to the unlucky one who is face to face with immediate necessity, and while you have a home, do all that in you lies to secure training. Look upon it as invested capital, which shall in time repay you well.

And if the girls are not easy to move, if we cannot make them think of anything beyond the gratification of the moment, let us urge upon parents that very close beside the term pocket-money

or bounty-fed wage stands another and an ugly term. They may be rather proud of saying, "My girl can afford to take little, she has it all for pocket-money;" but how often (and societies for women's employment could bear me out) there comes a change of circumstances—a widowhood, a breaking up of the old home, and the pocket-money wage is transformed into the subsistence wage, and finds it has been very close akin to its ugly half-brother, the starvation wage. The worker then joins a 4th class, the largest of all, that which takes low wages from dire necessity, and spends them not in dress and amusements, but in rent and food and fire.

Long, long ago an old Italian painter of the Renaissance charged his pupils to do all they could to shake themselves free from "intolerable mediocrity." Last year an old man in a Devonshire farm, who was making a success where many failed, said to me, "The secret is to offer what's *good*." That is the only safe path, the only way to guard against undercutting, unfair competition, and a selfish disregard of the welfare of others. For good, thorough, well-trained work of all kinds there is room and to spare. The finished secretary, the really expert demonstrator, the capable manageress, the thoroughly competent typist, the good cook, the trained teacher, the skilled embroideress, do not find their ranks overcrowded. You need not be a genius to find out one thing which, of its kind, even if it be a humble kind, you can learn to do well. Then have the ambition to rise above those who are content to flood the market with bad work, and when you have something good to offer, it will be easy for you to resolve not to part with it for a pocket-money wage.

## The Legal Regulation of Wages.

Mr Sidney Webb.

IN Melbourne, Victoria (population 400,000), the minimum wage in certain trades is now fixed by law. Under the Victorian Factory Act a joint board of employers and workpeople, with an impartial chairman, determines "the lowest price or rate which may be paid to any person for wholly or partially preparing or manufacturing, either inside or outside a factory or workroom,



any particular articles of clothing or wearing apparel, or furniture, or for breadmaking or baking" (Sec. 15). Any employer paying less than the rate so fixed is liable to be prosecuted by the factory inspector, and to be fined by the police magistrate. On a third offence, the registration of his factory or workroom (without which he cannot carry on his business at all "shall, without further or other authority than this Act, be forthwith cancelled by the chief inspector." It is now in force as regards tailoring, bootmaking, shirtmaking, cabinetmaking and bread-making. During the present session the Act has, after three years' experience, been continued and strengthened by a second Act, which, apart from details, may be said to have been passed by general consent.

As far as I could ascertain, the proposal to fix a legal minimum wage originated in the Factory Department itself, and it was warmly supported both by the philanthropists and the trade unions, and was not seriously resisted by the ordinary decent employer. It naturally took some time to get the machinery in motion, and there were at first many difficulties. The Baking Board, which had the simplest task, has been the most completely successful. It had to deal with men only, and fixed a minimum wage of 1s. an hour on an assumed 8-hour day, which was the rate ordinarily paid by the good employer; and both the factory inspectors and the trade union officials were convinced that this rate was now paid uniformly throughout the city. No rise in the price of bread could be detected. The workmen were now seeking to get the maximum hours also fixed by law, so as to prevent a few employers from working 9 or 10 hours. The Clothing Board had the more difficult duty of fixing, not only a time wage, but also a piecework list for outworkers. The operatives' representatives comprised 2 women and 3 men. After many sittings, it produced a voluminous "log" of over 30 printed pages of detailed rates, which thus received the force of law. Home-working tailors—largely women—had been getting wretched pay, sometimes as little as 6s. or 7s. a week. The Board started by considering what a single person could decently live on in Melbourne, and decided to fix the legal minimum, by common consent, at 20s. a week for time work. This was then translated into piecework rates, also by common consent, though often after long discussions on particular details. The chairman only once gave a casting vote, and even then the decision was subsequently reconsidered and revised by unanimous vote. What has been the result? It is clear that the legal rates are actually paid,

apparently everywhere, and certainly in the vast majority of cases. The income and the wellbeing of the workers has greatly improved. There is no evidence that the price of the article has gone up. My own impression is that the employers generally are no worse off, and this is supported by the fact that they do not protest against the law, and that they cordially co-operate in its working. It is said—and this, I imagine, is the explanation of the paradox—that with the increase in wage has come, at least, a corresponding improvement in work. It is alleged that the high piecework rates fixed for outworkers have caused more of the work to be done in factories, with increased division of labour, more machinery, and, generally, with better appliances. It is said, too, that the speed of working has greatly increased, as is, indeed, probable, if well-fed operatives, under factory discipline, have replaced the starving irregular homeworkers. The Shirt Board, which had to deal with some shockingly paid homeworkers, was not so courageous as the Clothing Board, and unanimously fixed the minimum wage at only 16s. per week, working this out into an equivalent piece work list. The operatives' representatives on this Board were all women, and only women were employed. Here I was expressly told that the proportion of outworkers to factory hands had not fallen off, but it was agreed that they all received the legally fixed rates. There is also an Underclothing or "White-work" Board, but this had so far failed to fix any rate, owing, apparently, to quarrels among the operatives' representatives, who were women without education or experience. The Bootmaking Board dealt with men only; it had fixed a time-work wage of 42s. a week, and a piece work list. This was apparently quite successful. Lastly, the Furniture Board, also dealing with men only, had got on all right where white men were employed (legal wage 8s. a day), and had considerably improved matters; but the Factory Department had utterly failed to get its rates observed, or, indeed, any sanitary or factory laws obeyed by the Chinese, who had secured a practical monopoly of the low-grade work.

The special interest of this experiment to women is its indication of the possibility of enacting and enforcing a national minimum wage. I have been forced to the conclusion that what keeps women's wages lower than men's, and does more than anything else to create the horrors of sweating, is not the competition between men and women (which, as a factor in this problem, hardly exists), but the economic fact that, for reasons too complicated to be here dwelt on, women are specially liable

to a kind of competition which takes the form of offering the same or worse service for a lower wage, and the struggle for existence is always tending to lower the quality and decrease the efficiency of the workers. The special curse of the woman worker is that we do nothing to protect her, so far as wages are concerned, from the degrading competition of the incompetent. This stultifies our Factory Acts and renders nugatory our attempts at technical education. I do not believe that the lowest grade of women workers will ever be appreciably raised until we take courage to apply to the rate of payment what, with regard to the other conditions of the wage contract, is already embodied in our Factory Acts, namely, exact a minimum—fixed at the point below which decent citizenship is demonstrably impossible—and make it a penal offence for anything lower than this to be offered or given either to man or woman.

## The Ethics of Spending.

Mrs F. Nathan (U.S.A.).

It is a popular saying that so long as one earns money honestly one may spend it as he pleases. It is a popular saying, but do you really believe it? Are you willing to take the position that this statement involves? For myself, I believe that in the spending of money there is the same ethics involved as in the making of it.

In the spending of large sums, we have long recognised the fact that it makes a vast difference to the advancement of civilisation, to the spread of culture, to the development of character, whether the money goes towards enriching the world of art, letters or science, or whether it is spent in riotous living, in bribery or corruption. But we are only *beginning* to realise that every time we spend a dollar we are really making something good or something evil. One of the most important truths established by the economists is that which places the responsibility of production where it belongs, with the consumers or purchasers. Let us consider this subject for a moment.

Professor Gide, of France, the well-known economist, has said, "We are on the threshold of a new epoch—the moral education of the consumer." Professor Hobson, the author of *Evolution*

of *Modern Capitalism*, insists that we may increase the wealth of a nation far more effectively by educating the consumers than by increasing the efficiency of the producers. He is very emphatic in declaring that "every consumer, by each act of purchase, is exerting a direct power of life or death over a class of producers."

This statement is a broad one, but it is capable of demonstration. Every time a purchaser buys an article, he sets in motion the energy which produces the article purchased. The demand of the purchaser or consumer creates the "economic want." For instance, owing to the great wave of patriotism that swept over the United States last spring, the demand for flags was so great, that manufacturers could not supply the demand, although they kept their factories open day and night. For every flag bought, another had to be put in its place, and each purchaser was helping to manufacture the red, white and blue.

Editors of newspapers are quite right when they state that they supply the kind of news that the public craves. If people refused to purchase low-toned, sensational journals, only the well-edited ones would thrive. Every time a person buys a vulgar book or newspaper, he helps to publish and disseminate vulgar literature.

If women truly desire to stop the slaughter of song-birds, of egrets that are killed while brooding over the nests of their birdlings, they need only refuse to purchase or to wear them, and the slaughter would come to an end as surely as though they took the guns out of the hunters' hands. As a final illustration, if people purchase and wear garments which are made in sweat-shops, at starvation prices, during excessively long hours, amid unsanitary conditions, garments stitched with the very blood and fibre of the helpless sweated victims, they are helping to manufacture garments "woven of the web of human life."

Thus we see that the character of the wares purchased depends upon the character of the purchasers, and it is vitally important that we recognise the fact that the ethics of money-spending lies not in the ability to procure novelties or bargains, but rather in the measure in which we succeed in buying only that which is moral and healthful to producer and consumer, only that which is made and sold under good conditions. I have good economic authority to support this statement. Professor Marshall of the University of Cambridge says: "We must endeavour to turn consumption into the paths that strengthen the consumers and call forth the best qualities of those who

provide for consumption." In other words, we must learn to supply our wants in such a way as not to work injury to ourselves or to others. Indeed, as has been said, the key to the solution of all social and economic problems is "to make our personal wants at one with the supreme good of the entire universe."

This, I take it, is the ideal of the Consumers' League, a movement in the United States.

Just as a child's first steps are naturally the shortest and easiest to accomplish, the New York League's first steps were in the direction of reforming conditions in shops. The League, after making many investigations, published a "White List" of those firms that treated their employees the most fairly and that approached nearest to the League's standard of a fair house. The League did not seek to antagonise merchants, but rather sought their co-operation in endeavouring to raise the standard of competition. The first "White List," published in 1891, consisted of but eight firms; the last one published comprised a list of 52 shops, including 12 ladies' tailors' establishments. The League has never lowered its standard; it is therefore obvious that many merchants have raised theirs since the League was first organised.

The growth of public sentiment led to State legislation, which brought about certain reforms. Inspection of mercantile establishments was provided for under the supervision of local Boards of Health. Employers were required to provide seats for female employees, the luncheon hour was lengthened, hours of labour for minors restricted to 60 a week, or 10 per day; children under 14 were not permitted to work, and those between the ages of 14 and 16 were obliged to have health and school certificates. Lunch rooms and basements were required to be in thorough sanitary condition; copies of the law were to be posted in three conspicuous places in each establishment. This the law has accomplished for us, but the Consumers' League has higher ideals than are as yet to be found in the laws.

The League asks its members to refrain as far as possible from shopping after five o'clock and on Saturday afternoons, in order to give stimulus and encouragement to the shorter working day and the half-holiday movements. It suggests that Christmas shopping be done as early in the season as possible in order to lessen the severe strain imposed upon clerks at that time of the year, and to prevent excessive overtime. (The League never places any shop on its White List where the saleswomen

are not compensated for overtime). The League has also been agitating for early deliveries. It has pointed out to members, that so long as people were willing to receive packages delivered after six o'clock (the close of the regular working day), delivery clerks were obliged to work from seven in the morning until eight, nine and ten o'clock at night during slack seasons, and until midnight, and even later during busy seasons. Merchants contend that they are compelled to send out their last delivery waggons very late, in order to oblige exacting customers. These merchants, in order that heads of departments need not be detained late, make it a rule not to receive goods from wholesale houses after five o'clock, and this rule is respected. It would be no more arbitrary for shoppers to insist that their goods be delivered before six o'clock or on the following day. This would enable delivery clerks to enjoy a little breathing time of an evening, a little rest or recreation. Some of them have told me that they only see their children on Sundays. It is only in emergencies that we really need goods delivered within two or three hours of purchase.

With the passage of the Mercantile Act, to which I referred a few moments ago, the League felt that it could broaden its scope of work. It next sought to reach the oppressed workers who made the goods that were sold over the counters. It asked its members to discriminate, when buying goods, between so-called legitimate bargains and illegitimate ones. In the former category I place goods that are sold cheap because merchant or manufacturer is overstocked or because the goods are no longer the prevailing fashion, or because they are used as an advertising medium to attract customers to some particular store. The illegitimate bargains, the ones that should burn the fingers of all conscientious customers who touch them, are those that are cheap because the workers have been under paid, or have been forced to work too long hours. And how, it will be asked, can we distinguish the one class of bargain from the other? The Trades Unions have solved the problem for the working people by asking them to buy goods bearing the Trades Union label, which guarantees Union wages and Union hours.

The National Federation of Consumers' Leagues, organised by the 4 existing State Leagues, hopes to put upon the market a label that will guarantee, not only fair wages and reasonable hours, but wholesome conditions as well. Unfair wages, inhuman hours and unwholesome conditions make possible illegitimate bargains.

We must, each one of us, remember that we are a part of the forces that create conditions of life. We must realise that we are each one of us a living force, capable of helping to crush down or to lift up humanity, able to assist in fostering conditions which must inevitably result in evil, vice and misery, or in sustaining conditions which make for justice, honour and happiness, and which must lead to the development of the good, the beautiful and the true in life.

# TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS.

*(See Report of the Educational Section of the Congress.)*

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## PROVIDENT SCHEMES.

*(See Report of the Social Section of the Congress.)*

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## CO-OPERATION AND PROFIT- SHARING.

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SMALL HALL, ST MARTIN'S TOWN HALL.

SATURDAY, JULY 1, FORENOON.

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MRS J. R. MACDONALD in the Chair.

[In the unavoidable absence of Mrs Alfred Booth, President of the National Council of Great Britain, from ill-health, the Chair was taken by Mrs J. R. MacDonald, Convener of the Industrial Sectional Committee.]

In opening the proceedings, Mrs MacDonald said that Co-operation was one of the most hopeful and the most active propaganda in the movement towards the solution of the great labour problem with which we are surrounded.

### Profit-Sharing.

Mr C. V. Gerritsen (Amsterdam).

PROFIT-SHARING, as you will know, is the voluntary agreement between employer and employee by which the employee is granted,



by way of bonus, in addition to his or her ordinary wages, a share in the net final profits of the business in which he or she is engaged. The division of profits derived from co-operative distribution of commodities among consumers is by this definition excluded.

The employer's intention in granting this share is to give his employees an interest in the business, which shall stimulate their zeal and industry. It is moreover expected that this system of labour remuneration will prevent strikes and conflicts, and that the disastrous antagonism between employer and employee will cease.

With regard to the production, the system is asserted not to be prejudicial to the profits of the employer, as it enables him to obtain such profits under a participating system as would not accrue under the established methods of wage-paying as they exist—time wages, piece wages, task wages, progressive wages.

Profit-sharing induces the worker not to dawdle, not to scamp his work and not to waste material. As a rule, labour will be more conscientiously and diligently performed. Each employee has a direct interest, not only in doing his own work well, but in seeing that his fellow-workers, and even his superintendents, do not neglect their duties. The share of the profits of an undertaking is generally granted from the surplus (if any) of the clear profits, that is to say, of what remains after a dividend has been paid on the capital embarked, and after the usual deduction to pay off the capital and other legitimate allowances. What is then left, as excess profit, is divided between labour, capital and management, while the profits which fall to labour are distributed among the employees *in proportion to, and as a percentage above, their respective earnings* during the year in which such profits have accrued.

It is only fair that, having mentioned the advantages of the profit-sharing system, we should also consider the disadvantages, for these are not insignificant. The system involves the participation of the employed in all the complex factors that affect the final result or profit of an undertaking, including, necessarily, its losses, since these tend to impair, or may even swallow up, the profit. Consequently, the interest of every participator in the profits is affected by the actions of others, whom he cannot control or influence. Whatever he may earn or save for the common good may be lost by the mismanagement or extravagance of others. To a greater or lesser degree even the skill, experience, industry and ability of the manager affects the profit results of the whole business. They are likewise affected by causes beyond

the control of the directors, by fluctuations in cost of raw material or in the market value of the finished product. On the other hand, since a bonus is granted collectively in proportion to the earnings, it must needs be also given to employees of whom it is uncertain whether they have returned an equivalent for it, or whether they may not consider it much easier not to exert themselves and all the same to share the results with their active and energetic fellow-workmen.

Profits are generally ascertained and distributed once a year, so that the stimulus to activity is to a great extent weakened by the remoteness of the reward; the average working man being accustomed to quick returns and not to working for a benefit that may come to him at the end of a twelvemonth.

Besides, the agreement binds the employees through the possibility of large profits or expecting them to an undertaking, and withholds them from seeking employment on better terms elsewhere, an advantage dear to every person of energy and independence. Another objection is, that the workmen have no means of knowing if the agreement is carried out properly. With their exaggerated ideas of the profits of a business, the result must be in many cases disappointing, and doubts about the honesty of the division will arise.

The most serious drawback, however, to profit-sharing is that under it the employees always remain mere wage-earners, that the detested wage-system is maintained. The generous gift of the employer, by which his workers become associates in profits, in exchange for special assiduity, alters neither the real character nor the essential position of the wage-earning employees. The control of the business is left in the hands of the employer, and there is no probability that disputes will be less frequent or less violent. The germ of these disputes as to how much is to go to the workman and how much to the master is not removed; strikes for higher wages may diminish, those for an increase of the share of the profits will take place.

The only right way to remove the principal objections against the profit-sharing and wage system is, according to my opinion, to eliminate from the organisation of industry the principal element of disputes—the *entrepreneur*. It is the workmen themselves who must conduct the business, no longer receiving wages but the entire profits of the undertaking.

Profit-sharing, if only not adopted as a final solution of the question of labour-remuneration, but taken as a transition towards co-operative production, may become beneficial to the workers.

The adaptation of the industrial co-operation to the present wage-system and the profit-sharing method can be obtained by working men or their trades unions if they insist on the bonus, or a considerable part of it, being paid in shares of the business, not transferable as long as the employee is engaged in the business. The model upon which several undertakings of this kind have been organised lately in Holland was founded in 1892 by the well-known Dutch pioneer of co-operation, Mr J. C. Van Marken, the manager of the Netherland Yeast Manufactory at Delft.

In that year he established a printing business, for which it was stipulated that the share falling to labour should be distributed amongst the employees in proportion to the wages earned during the year, and at least half of this bonus should be paid in shares of the business. To render this possible it was further stipulated that for this part of the bonus an equivalent amount of the former capital should be amortised at par, and to realise the idea of the founder, that also in future the shares should remain as much as possible in the hands of the actual employees of the business, it was stipulated that the amortisation of the capital should go on and begin again every time the whole capital had been paid off, in order that none of the shares should be left for long in the hands of workmen who had left the business, or of their families. The result has been a perfect success. At the present moment more than  $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of the shares are in the hands of the workers, and it is expected that in 10 years after its foundation the whole business will be the property of the employees. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the mutual relation amongst the workers in such establishments is most cordial, and that everyone exhibits special assiduity.

The same, or nearly the same, scheme has since been adopted by half a dozen other undertakings, and lastly by a ladies' and gentlemen's tailoring, dressmaking and drapery business, managed principally by women, while the working power is supplied almost exclusively by women.

In what I have said thus far on profit-sharing and its evolution into industrial co-partnership, there has been nothing touching women's interests specifically. The question as I put it is of general interest to society, it has nothing to do with sex. Industrial freedom renders every industrial employment accessible to women. It is true that in many countries, in England as well as in Holland, women are prevented by special legislation from making use of their freedom in the same way as

men. But apart from this question it has become customary in industrial, as well as in official employments, to pay for the same work lower wages or salaries to women than to men ; and it is this pernicious injustice which makes the subject I treated even more important for women than for men.

As long as the wage-system, with or without profit-sharing, is maintained, it is to be feared that industrial managers will go on thinking it just that supply and demand, in its most rigorous consequences, should influence the price of women's wages. Before women are organised strongly enough in trades unions to enable them to claim for the same work the same wages as men, scores of years may elapse. And even when obtained by extraordinary energy and perseverance it is still an open question whether the result will be in accordance with the sacrifices this struggle will require. At the present moment the struggle for a better remuneration of labour in general is so far advanced in the direction of co-operative production, that we may expect ere long the suppression of the wage-system ; and with this prospect it seems rather the task of women to assist, actually and morally, in promoting this evolution.

The time is dawning when workmen and workwomen, by better instruction and higher intelligence, combined with stronger feelings of justice and responsibility, will make superfluous the intermediary between capital and labour in the productive process. As long as profit-sharing is applied, women are *doubly* wronged. First by getting lower wages than men, and again by getting the bonus in proportion only to the wages earned. By being paid with shares for the yearly bonus, or part of it, working women as well as working men become slowly but surely shareholders, and so acquire control over the administration, while, when a predominant influence has been obtained, it may be expected that sex will no longer influence the price of wages.

In the last-mentioned stage of production, however, when co-partnership shall triumph, and the supply and demand system will no longer fix the price of wages, the remuneration will take place for every partner, of whatever sex, according to each worker's share of labour in the product.

## Co-operation.

**Mrs Deans, Secretary of the Women's Co-operative Guild  
of Woolwich.**

CO-OPERATION, as practised in England to-day, is worked on what is known as the Rochdale system, because it had its origin in Rochdale, where a co-operative society was started in 1844 by twenty-eight members, with twenty-eight £1 shares.

The system simply stated is this:—Goods are purchased at wholesale prices from capital subscribed by a number of people who constitute the members of a co-operative society. These goods are sold at current retail prices. After all working expenses are paid, the profits are divided among members in:—

- (a) Dividend at so much on every £ spent at the store;
- (b) Half-dividend being, in many societies, paid to non-members who are only purchasers;
- (c) So much per cent on share capital—generally 5 per cent;
- (d) In most societies so much set apart for educational purposes.
- (e) Grants to the Women's Co-operative Guild; grants to local and other charities, and any other way the members may decide.

Anyone may become a member of a co-operative society by taking up two £1 shares, and purchasing a copy of the rules.

In established societies these shares may be paid up by instalments after purchasing a copy of the rules and the payment of one shilling. The dividend on purchases, which is always withdrawable, may be allowed to accumulate till these shares are paid up.

Any member joining thus is a full member, with voting powers, and all members' privileges except serving on committees.

The Educational Grant has, among other purposes, been largely used for establishing libraries and reading-rooms in connection with the stores free to members. Thus co-operators have been the pioneers of free libraries, having established them for themselves.

There is a Co-operative Wholesale Society whose chief offices are at Manchester, with branches at Newcastle-on-Tyne and London, also sub-branches in various parts of the country. As individuals with their shares form the co-operative societies, so

individual co-operative societies form the Co-operative Wholesale Society, which, of course, pays a dividend on shares.

The Co-operative Wholesale Society has established many productive factories in this country, also creameries in Ireland, and emporiums in various parts of the world. This is called Federated Production.

Co-operation also flourishes in Scotland, where they have a wholesale society of their own.

There are also many productive societies which are formed and worked independently of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. They are organised and worked on different plans, the chief difference being that these individual societies share the profits with the employees who are shareholders, and that in many the latter have a voice in the management. There is also a bonus on labour.

The Co-operative Union is a combination of societies, originated for the purpose of providing some definite means of helping each other in matters legal, educational and propagandist. It provides literature and speakers for meetings, gives advice, helps generally in many ways, and always arranges the Annual Co-operative Congress.

The Union is financed by the societies composing it. It may be said to bear the same relation to co-operative education that the Co-operative Wholesale Society bears to commercial co-operation.

The Women's Co-operative Guild, a most potent educational factor in the movement, will be dealt with later on.

The primary object of co-operation is the material improvement of its members through organising the distribution of the common necessities of life, leading thereby to the organising of the *production* of those necessities.

The secondary object of co-operation is the education of its members in the principles of co-operation itself, and all economic subjects dealing with this distribution and production, as affecting themselves and their fellow-workers. This education leads them always to strive for improvement in the quality of products, reforms in the hours of labour, and improvement in the conditions, sanitary and otherwise, of stores, workshops and factories, with a view to the material comfort and moral uplifting of those employed therein. All this in its turn leads to a desire for the attainment of that higher life which it is practically impossible for many to participate in owing to their dismal degrading surroundings.

As co-operation becomes more and more financially successful,

there appears to its members the necessity of acquiring some of that knowledge which will fit them to take their proper places in the struggle for reforms which is actuating all right-thinking men and women of to-day. The land question, municipal work, education, recreation, libraries, baths, etc., all are receiving the earnest attention of intelligent co-operators. There is no social problem of all those which are perplexing us to-day which cannot be grappled and well dealt with by co-operators once their own fundamental principles are well grasped, and the commercial success of the individual stores ensured.

Co-operation, a thoroughly democratic movement, is a means whereby public spirit may be aroused and developed in men and women, making of them better citizens with a desire for the raising of life's level. Reformers and theorists may preach, but a practical movement like this, originated by the people for the people, will do more in a short time towards working out their salvation than an epoch of preaching, because co-operators have to rely on self-help, and self-help is the best help of all.

Yet individualism has no place in co-operation. Men under its influence become almost unconsciously drawn into the nobler scheme of caring for others. It teaches so plainly how interwoven are the lives of all human beings, so that none can work ill or do good which does not in some way affect others.

Co-operation has done *more for women* than any other movement of the time.

With few exceptions, all co-operative societies grant to women exactly the same privileges as men. It is recognised that as women are the great purchasing power of the movement, on which so much depends, they are entitled to a voice in the government and management of their stores.

This affords women the most ample means of becoming intelligent and interested citizens, and also accustoming men to seeing women take their share of work in many things which have been hitherto considered to be best done exclusively by men. It is also beneficial in the presence of women amongst men. Wherever men and women work together, the influence of the latter for good is always perceptible.

Co-operative women themselves have not been idle in view of the duties devolving on them.

For many years now they have been banded together for mutual improvement in what is known as the Women's Co-operative Guild, and while growing in numbers and intelligence every year through their own efforts, they are firmly establishing them-

selves as a powerful educational and economic force in the movement, ready and willing to take their part and work side by side with their men folk.

The objects of the Women's Co-operative Guild, which now numbers 262 branches with 12,560 members, are:—

The study of co-operation and all questions dealing with the social problems and reforms of the day; and

All domestic subjects which may help or interest women in the better management of homes and care of children.

The guild is essentially an organisation for women of the people—women who have a practical knowledge of life, and who in the guild are training themselves to take part, not only in their own organisation, but in all else that aims at raising the status of women and enlarging their sphere of usefulness.

Members of the guild are oftentimes lacking the polished education of their wealthier sisters, but are nevertheless possessed of a vast amount of common sense, which, with their practical experience, stands them in good stead, and which is always invaluable in the very branches of public work women are likely to be called on to do.

In no other movement of to-day is there more scope for women.

Onward! is the watchword of co-operation.

That which fifty years ago was a tiny brook is to-day a great river. Mighty and strong and deep, its tributaries still flowing sometimes o'er rocky beds, thereby only gathering force to cast their waters into the larger stream, which in its turn discharges into the great ocean beyond and washes the shores of every land.

## Co-operation and Profit-Sharing.

Herr G. H. Von Koch (Stockholm).

DURING the few minutes that are allotted to me it will not be my purpose to point out the great moral and economical value of the system known as co-operation and profit-sharing. I think we can all agree that could these systems, especially the former, be introduced more widely in the people's life, they would be of very great use in raising the moral and economical standpoint, especially amongst the working men and women.

The main purpose of this meeting is, I suppose, to hear from



the lips of the delegates a statement of how the systems of co-operation and profit-sharing have developed during later years in the different countries, if the weak points can be remedied, and whether some suggestions, some new plans, could be brought forward to help and to strengthen the movement. By this it is to be hoped that we shall be able to battle more successfully against all difficulties in co-operative work, and also to look forward with greater confidence to the future.

We have in Sweden only a few firms which have adopted the profit-sharing system. The most important experiment has been made at the large ironworks, Atlas, near Stockholm, which employs about 750 hands. The system was adopted in 1891. Twenty per cent. of the net profit is given to those employees who have been in the company's service a certain time, and who also are the bearers of testimony as to skill and diligence from their foremen.

When the company adopted this system, it was hoped that at least one-half of the working men would be benefited by it, and it was thought that the sharing of profits would at length give the company an *élite* of working men. But this has not been the case. The company has hitherto not been able to give more than one-third of the workmen any share of the profits, the other two-thirds having consisted of men who have been constantly coming and going. The profits given have during later years amounted to considerable sums; for instance, during last year, they varied between 12 and 18 per cent. of the salaries received, or, as a whole, 44,200 kronor.

However interesting this system of profit-sharing may be, it is of comparatively little importance, if not leading to some kind of co-operation or labour copartnership. Otherwise it would not help to raise the moral standpoint of the workmen. It is only by using some kind of co-operation or labour copartnership that we can hope to alter the conditions of the workers, and reconcile capital and labour, between which there is war at present.

The little we have to say about co-operation in Sweden is soon told. To begin with, in the distributive associations we have about 100 co-operative societies and 150 small joint stock companies, which work on the same lines, but have limited share capitals. They have all been started by and amongst the working men, and they all sell groceries, provisions, etc. As yet they have not been combined into any union. The organisation of the societies is generally based upon the Rochdale principles. Yet there are some differences and defects.

Thus the credit system is used to a large extent; the profits are yearly distributed amongst the members, and cannot be put into the society, and therefore the societies do not act as savings banks. Very few meetings are held in the year, no educational work, nor any attempt to spread our principles, are carried out, and the purpose of the societies is purely economical. A share of the profit is never paid to the employees.

Considered solely from a business point of view, the co-operative movement has succeeded at some large ironworks, and at the sawmills in the north of Sweden, where the societies have not had to fight with competitors. In the larger towns it is quite different. The reason why co-operation has not succeeded there is the same that has caused so many failures in larger towns in England. The shifting character of the population, the exceptional competition in large cities, the want of knowledge of each other, etc., are the most common causes. The difficulty of making co-operation succeed in large centres of population is perhaps the greatest problem at present to solve for the co-operators. It cannot be denied that co-operation at these places has hitherto proved to be a glaring failure. Here is ample room for suggestions, but, as far as I know, there has not been discovered any method to remedy this state of things.

The best known of all co-operative enterprises in Sweden are perhaps the co-operative creameries, butter and cheese factories. They have become very useful to the farmers, and have saved them much money, which would otherwise have been lost. Some figures will show the development of this kind of agricultural co-operation. In 1890 all the co-operative creameries in Sweden numbered only 73. At the end of 1895 the number was not less than 302, and since then many more such have been started. In the southern provinces, where agriculture has reached the highest developments, the increase in the number of co-operative creameries is extraordinary. Thus there existed in Skane in 1890 only 1 single co-operative creamery as against 199 other kinds. Five years later the number of the latter had decreased to 92, but the co-operative creameries numbered 48.

The organisation of these is very simple. The members of the society borrow necessary capital by which a creamery is erected. All the milk produced on the members' estates must be sent to the creamery. The price for the milk is the same for all, and is fixed once a month. A member's share in the creamery is calculated in accordance with the payment he has received for the milk. The number of members, and the quantity of milk

they supply, varies much. In some creameries there are several hundreds of members.

At some places it has been arranged so that the members can be supplied with food, etc., by the creamery. Most of the creameries are also united in strong bodies, which watch their common interests. But we have not developed the idea any further, and not extended the co-operative principle to the farm labourers.

I attach very great importance to agricultural co-operation. We all know under what depressing circumstances the farmers are working at present in England, how the people rush to the towns, and leave the country isolated and depopulated, and, as a matter of fact, the large centres grow in population three times as rapidly as the country does on the whole. I do not wonder that the people leave the country for the cities; farming does not pay. Some change in the methods of agriculture must take place. Co-operators believe that their principles, applied to agriculture, would solve the problem. They wish to transform the farm labourer, as we know him at present, to an interested, skilful small holder, who could by individual efforts and intensive culture, get much more from the land than has been possible hitherto.

Of productive societies we have very few in Sweden; only some small bakeries, sawmills, etc.; but as they have started recently, it is not possible to predict their future.

## Co-operative Production.

**Mr Henry Vivian, Secretary to the Labour Association for  
Promoting Co-operative Production, London.**

THE term co-operative production was applied originally to those workshops in which the producers put their capital, character and skill together to establish or conduct a business with or without outside help.

The friends of co-operative production, using the term in the sense I have indicated, add another label to the workshops they approve of, and call them Labour Copartnership Workshops. The essence of this copartnership is (1) That in virtue of their position as workers the workers receive a share in the profits; it

is *not* claimed that they receive the whole profit. (2) That in virtue of their position as working shareholders the workers should have a share in the management; it is *not* claimed that they should have the whole management. (3) That this arrangement be a matter of fixed rules, so that the privileges of the workers be as it were secured by the law, and not left to the caprice of individuals, to be given or withheld as a matter of favour. It is the practice in most of the copartnership businesses for the profit allotted to the workers to be capitalised as shares up to an amount fixed by rule, instead of its being paid out in cash.

Robert Owen and his followers saw the evils of the industrial revolution, and tried as a remedy to establish co-operative communities of a self-supporting character. Economic conditions and the character of the people were, however, against these enthusiasts. In 1848, the Christian Socialists—Maurice, Kingsley, Hughes, Neale, Ludlow—began their propaganda. They sought to establish self-governing workshops in which the actual workers should own or borrow all the capital, should elect the committee from among themselves, and, subject to a payment to a central fund, should enjoy all the profits. In doing this the Christian Socialists appear to have made three important mistakes. They found practically all the money to start the societies, so that the workers had nothing at stake. They took the workmen applying for membership as they came, not attempting to get picked men, and lastly, they gave them full control over the workshops—that is, over other people's property. The state of the law was also against the growth of co-operative production in the early days of the movement, but the granting of limited liability in 1862 gave it an impetus. In 1883, the year in which the Labour Association was formed, the statistics of the Co-operative Union showed a meagre development of fifteen copartnership societies, but the following figures will show the progress made up to the end of 1897 :—

	1883.	1893.	*1897.
Societies	15	108	169
Sales	£160,751	£1,292,688	£2,714,346
Capital	103,436	639,884	1,180,906
Profits	9,031	67,663	137,506

These figures do not include those relating to capitalistic enterprises which have adopted the principle more or less.

\* The figures for 1898 are not quite complete but as far as they go they show that progress has been made.

The following very brief information concerning some of the businesses in which the principle is applied may be of interest.

Hebden Bridge Fustian Society, founded in 1870 by working men, and doing a trade in 1898 of £45,000. Paisley Co-operative Manufacturing Society, founded as long ago as 1862, and doing a trade in 1898 of £74,000. Thomson's Woollen Cloth Factory, at Huddersfield, registered in 1886, and doing a trade in 1898 of £22,000. Airedale Worsted Society, founded in 1872, and doing a trade in 1898 of £18,000. Burnley Self-Help Cotton Manufacturing Society, founded in 1886, and doing a trade in 1897 of £66,000; recently in financial trouble, but on the way to overcoming it. Leek (Staffordshire) Silk Twist Manufacturing Society, founded in 1874, and doing in 1897 a trade of £10,000. Leicester Co-operative Hosiery Society, founded in 1876, and doing in 1898 a trade of £57,000. Kettering Clothing Society (Northamptonshire), founded in 1893, and doing in 1898 a trade of £28,000. The Boot trade gives us a long list. The counties of Leicester and Northampton furnish nearly a dozen societies between them. The Leicester Equity Boot and Shoe Society, founded in 1887, did a trade in 1898 of £45,000. The Kettering Co-operative Boot and Shoe Society, founded in 1888, did a trade in 1898 of £33,000. Outside of these two favoured counties there are Boot Societies at Nantwich and Bristol. In the allied industry of Leather Manufacturing we have the London Leather Society, a purely workmen's effort, begun in 1891, which did a trade of £9000 in 1897; and the Canterbury Co-operative Tanners, registered in 1895. In Hardware, we have societies at Keighley, Dudley, Walsall, Alcester and Sheffield. In the high class of mechanical work we have the Coventry Watchmakers, founded in 1876; the General Engineers, London; and the Leicester Co-operative Engineers. In Woodwork, there are the Bradford Cabinetmakers of 1890; in Newcastle two, one as old as 1873, and doing a trade of £16,000 in 1897; and one at Halifax, recently registered. There should be mentioned also the societies of Builders and Contractors in London, Hull, Oxford, Cambridge, Kettering, Leicester and Newcastle, and the Plymouth House Painters. There is also a society of Barge and Boat Builders on the Merway. Printing is well represented; Edinburgh, Leicester, Manchester, Nottingham, Blackpool, Hull, and now Plymouth, each having a society. Then there is the London Bookbinders' Society, registered in 1885. We have in Glasgow the United Baking Society, of 1868, with its trade of £150,000, and nearly

1000 employees; and the Scottish Wholesale Society with several productive departments, and 3000 employees. In the town of Leicester there are seven co-partnership businesses, and in Kettering there are five. The Irish Co-operative Dairies are the most remarkable co-operative enterprise in the sister island, there being about sixty societies in the north alone.

In some cases membership (a member is a shareholder) is almost confined in practice to the workers in the trade. In other cases the workers in the trade will form a small proportion of the membership. The committee of management in one case will consist entirely of workers for the business, and in another the workers may not be members of the committee, although they may vote in the election of others.

In the division of profit, too, there is variety. The Kettering Boot and Shoe Society gives 40% of its profits to labour, whilst the London Leather Manufacturers give 63%. Some businesses arrange to give consumers' societies a share of profits, others do not. The Hebden Bridge Fustian Society only gives share capital 5% interest; the Kettering Clothing gives it 5% plus a share of the net profit. The interest usually paid to share capital before net profits are divided is 5%, but the Walsall Padlock Society gives share capital  $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ .

In capitalising workers' profits an effort is made to so fix the amount that ultimately the capital held by a worker shall be a substantial proportion of the capital required to employ him.

With regard to the effect of the system on wages, co-partnership businesses pay the standard or recognised wages as a minimum, and any share of profit allotted to the workers is in addition to this. The following is last year's division of profit in the Walsall Padlock Society:—

Interest on Shares at $7\frac{1}{2}\%$	£204	0	0
Dividend on Interest at 1s. 6d. in the £	15	6	0
Dividend on Wages of £7,300 at 1s. 6d. in the £	547	10	0
Committee, as per rules	22	10	0
Educational Fund, as per rules	22	10	0
Provident Fund	45	0	0
Charitable Fund	15	0	0
Accident Insurance	20	0	0
Reserve Fund	21	2	1
	£912	18	1

As this is a Women's Congress it may be of interest to you to know that a large proportion of the workers in the co-partner-

ship movement are women, and that to these workers the same privileges of co-partnership are extended as to men. At the Kettering Corset Society there are three women workers on the committee. As a rule, however, the women workers, although at times in a majority of shareholders, admit that man is still the "superior person" by electing him to look after their business.

The foreign experience is also very interesting, as it includes the Co-partnership Iron Foundry of Guise, the great Leclaire Painting and Decorating business of Paris, the Nelson Manufacturing Co. of Leclaire, U.S.A.

On looking over the businesses at present included within it, it does seem that the principle is not likely to make progress rapidly in those branches of industry where the individual is supreme, and the concentration of labour and capital counts for little or nothing. Nor does it seem easily applicable where, in addition to the concentration of labour and capital being important, the speculative and risky character of the enterprise makes absolute autocracy in management almost inevitable. Between these two extremes, however, there is a wide field in which the extension of the principle seems possible.

Mme. Renée Gange, who was to have given an account of the co-operative movement in Belgium, and Mr Johnston, who was to have spoken for Mme. Godin on French co-operation, were unable to be present.

#### DISCUSSION.

Mr Pumphrey, in opening the discussion, said he wished to refer more particularly to the paper which had been read by Mrs Deans. She had showed them very clearly what the societies were doing, but he should like to add a few more facts. The members of various co-operative societies in England now numbered 1,800,000 members. They had 1100 societies in the wholesale society, with a membership of 1,200,000. That showed that the working people of the country held under their control an enormous business employing large numbers of people. The capital of the wholesale society was over 2½ millions, nearly the whole of which was accumulated profit. They had also a reserve of £154,000, an insurance fund of £375,000, and a bank which turned over more than 50 millions a year. Referring to the co-operative production, Mr Pumphrey said they had 13 works, producing a large variety of articles, with a total output of £1,600,000 a year. The employees in those productive works

numbered about 10,000. The society also owned seven vessels for the conveyance of the products, and last year sold over 4500 tons of tea.

**Mrs Dobson** (of Tasmania) gave a short sketch of a co-operative village settlement which they had started in that country. At the time there was a great trade depression, and large numbers of men were in need of employment, so it was decided to start a settlement for them in the country. They advertised for men to go into the primeval forests to clear the ground—working on the co-operative principle. A sum of money was raised by subscription to get the men and their families to the woods, and this sum was subsidised by the Government. After working for about a year, it was found that co-operation amongst those labourers did not succeed. The principal reason for the failure lay in the fact that the strong would not work for the weak. Co-operation was then given up, and each man was given a section of land for himself. She might add that the settlement seemed to be going on very well.

**Mr Harris**, secretary of the Co-operative Brotherhood Trust, pointed out that as co-operative distribution was an admitted success, they should turn even more attention than they were at that time doing to co-operative production. They had been told that 10,000 people were employed by the wholesale society, and he would point out that if the principle could be extended the workers would gradually become independent of the capitalist and exploiter. That seemed to him the point they should dwell upon—the necessity of producing for one another. It seemed to him that the co-operative movement was a peaceful method of solving the many labour problems with which they were perplexed.

**Miss Dowson** said she thought the two dangers that the movement had to face at this time were the eagerness for dividends and the tendency of the public to demand that the co-operative shop should be the market for other than co-operative goods. She might say that they did not want the general public to go to their shops; they wanted co-operators. Another thing which she thought ought to be insisted upon was, that when they had to buy products from capitalistic firms they should only buy of those firms who carried out their work under fair conditions.

**Miss Irene Ashby** and **Dr Drysdale** spoke on some aspects of co-operative production.

**Miss Catherine Webb** stated that, speaking generally, the co-operative movement laid down the principle that the



minimum wage, wherever paid, should be raised if there was any possibility of so doing. The Women's Guild had endeavoured to find out how wages went amongst co-operative women workers, but they found that the employees did not get much beyond the minimum wage. The average of working hours throughout the country in the distributive co-operative concerns was 54 hours a week, whereas the average amongst the ordinary shopkeepers was some 70 and 80.

**Miss Neal**, who started a co-operative dressmaking association in London amongst some club girls, gave particulars of the founding of the society and the way in which it was worked. They started on the eight hours a day principle, with a minimum wage of 15s. a week to all girls. They also started a small co-operative store, and she was glad to say that after two years' working, during which time she and other friends had managed the business, they had now been enabled to hand over both concerns to the total management of the girls.

**Mrs Bridges Adams**, Plumstead, said she had been elected to the London School Board mainly by co-operators. In her district the co-operators were endeavouring to solve the housing question, and had bought a piece of land on which they were going to build 1500 houses. That would mean practically a colony of co-operators, and she looked forward with the greatest hope to the good work which would be possible in that colony.

**Mr Ballantyne**, Glasgow, said that one of the great features in the co-operative movement was that there was no sweating. When he told the meeting that he had found women making costume skirts at 4s. 6d. a dozen, they could quite understand that he appreciated the value of the co-operative movement. In Glasgow the women who were employed in the tailoring department were paid in the same ratio as the men.

At the close of the meeting **Mr Ballantyne** said he knew they would accord **Mrs J. R. MacDonald** and the Industrial Sectional Committee a hearty vote of thanks for the admirable organisation of the meetings of the Industrial Section.

**Mrs MacDonald** thanked the meeting, and moved a vote of thanks to the speakers and readers of papers.

Both motions were carried with applause, and the proceedings terminated.



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